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Liberals And/*Versus* Conservatives

An article by PETER VIERECK, *with comments by* HEINZ EULAU *and* PAUL BIXLER

The Zeitgeist and the Supreme Court

—Henry M. Ehrmann

World Law and World Reform

—Susanne K. Langer

Soviet Russian Policy

on Nationalities . . . JULIAN TOWSTER

on Authority and Freedom . ERNEST J. SIMMONS

Other articles, stories, poems by SAMUEL YELLEN, HOWARD GRIFFIN, LOUIS FILLER, JOSEPH JOEL KEITH, LESLIE MELLICHAMP

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see Susanne K. Langer's article on page 462

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Editors' Shop Talk

Not long ago one of the editors of this magazine told the rest of us to wake up. He was disturbed about big business and he cited a number of its activities, of which the most exciting concerned a man named Greenhut. Mr. Greenhut had published a full-page ad in *The New York Times* under the heading "An Open Letter to the President of the United States," offering to form a world oil corporation and take the whole Middle East problem, the whole Communist problem, and perhaps the whole Point Four Program off the backs of the American people.

What about it? our editor asked.

* * *

Mr. Greenhut's proposition — like any offer to substitute something (in this case, "economic diplomacy") for war and the United Nations—seemed fascinating; and if we could find someone to examine the proposition on its merits, we should publish his findings with alacrity. But the case against big business generally seems a mixed one. Times have changed since the 1920's, and along with them certain elements in the business community. Some modern businessmen show signs of statesmanship. For example, the Committee for Economic Development has sponsored a series of volumes on public policy worthy of the most thoughtful attention—one of the latest, Harold Lasswell's *National Security and Individual Freedom,* being perhaps the most outstanding book in a field that business has heretofore avoided.

All good editors reserve the right to be disturbed. But what disturbs us is not so much the claims of American business as the implications. And our disturbance is not only over business but over government. There has recently been growing up a confused complex of business-government-higher education-research relationships so involved as to render disentanglement next to impossible and so unplanned as to avoid evaluation.

When Benjamin Fairless says that "the destinies of private enterprise and private education in the next half century will be closely intertwined," the words don't startle us as much as some of the activities already taking place. Part of what we refer to is the "top-secret" work of such an outfit as the Rand Corporation and the hundreds of contracts farmed out to private institutions by the Atomic Energy Commission. Federal aid to education has never yet passed the Congress. But for higher education we already have it in unplanned form. A number of universities wouldn't be able to pay their bills if federal money for research were cut off.

Much of this activity seems significant. But we question the lack of planning, of explanation, of evaluation. And in some of these confused combinations, we would ask what is happening to the morale and the basic integrity of the free university, the independent thinker and the individual investigator.

There are several dozen articles in the several aspects of this problem. We'd be happy to entertain a few.

Liberals and Conservatives, 1789-1951

By PETER VIERECK

In Europe liberalism and conservatism often correspond to two rival parties. Here nineteenth-century England is still the classic model. In twentieth-century America, conservatism and liberalism cannot be identified with such meaningless grab-bag labels as "Republican" and "Democrat." They exist as rival wings within each state organization of both American parties.

In America the meanings of liberalism and conservatism are blurred, sometimes to meaninglessness, always to vagueness. They are blurred by our empiricism, our distrust of theories, our political inconsistencies in both parties, reflecting at worst opportunism and at best the American zest for experiment. In that sense we are still very much the new-born republic for whom all Europe's isms are "wasms." But such a calculated contempt for isms and abstractions is itself an ism, and quite an abstract one. In the pious fervor of its faithlessness, it is a faith sometimes just as doctrinaire and stultifying as the European throne-and-altar dogmas scorned by American empiricists and pragmatists.

Any discussion of liberalism and conservatism, though it must end

---

The problem of what constitutes a desirable social program, as contrasted with one which merely identifies itself with traditionally-approved party labels or forward-sounding phrases, has been receiving increased attention. Peter Viereck has taken the lead, of late, in reviving for fresh consideration what seem to him insufficiently appreciated aspects of conservatism. He teaches European history at Mt. Holyoke College and is also a poet (his latest volume *Strike Through the Mask*). His *Conservatism Revisited* (Scribner, 1949) attempted a new review of Metternich's personality and accomplishments. The present essay will appear with others in a volume tentatively called *The Devaluation of Values: Babbitt Junior vs. a New Conservatism* to be published by the Beacon Press. Heinz Eulau, who takes issue with Mr. Viereck, is on leave from Antioch College on a Ford fellowship for the advancement of college teaching. Paul Bixler expresses his personal view of both Mr. Viereck's and Mr. Eulau's opinions.

in twentieth-century America, must begin in nineteenth-century Europe, where the contours of terminology are less shadowy.

Then and now, here or there, liberalism vs. conservatism is not the battle between right and wrong that both sides, in the drama of debate, may imagine it to be. It is a battle between right and right. For each shares an equally needed half of a unifying psychological and political truth. From the strained rhyme of the Gilbert and Sullivan opera, we learn:

> . . . every boy and every gal
> That's born into the world alive,
> Is either a little Liberal,
> Or else a little Conservative!

We may add that every democracy "born into the world alive," must be both liberal *and* conservative. In a free, law-abiding society, liberals and conservatives should battle each other sturdily within the peaceful parliamentary framework. But they should instantly stand united against violent unparliamentary threats from extremists of left or right; that is, from radicals or reactionaries, communists or fascists.

In an unhealthy, unstable society, liberals and conservatives are centrifugal rather than centripetal; tangential and rootless and outward-bound rather than (in Wordsworth's phrase)

> Type of the wise who soar, but never roam;
> True to the kindred points of Heaven and Home.

In consequence, such a polarized, uncentered society is finally rent asunder in the tug of war between opposite political extremes.

Examples of healthy societies, deeply and centrally rooted, are England, Scandinavia, Switzerland, Holland, and Belgium, where the western heritage was preserved and democracy attained. But what of countries where liberals and conservatives are constantly gravitating to radicalism and reaction respectively, to communism and to fascism? There the result is class war or ideological war, with the western heritage of freedom the victim of alternate terror from both sides. The most notorious example of this is Russia, alternating between the rightist extreme of tsarism and the leftist extreme of communism. Russia never attained a workable, parliamentary, middle way, except for the promising interlude of the Duma of 1905-1917.

LIBERALS AND CONSERVATIVES

During 1871-1951, Germany and France alternate between central and polarized societies, while England remains the former and Russia the latter. Germany inclines more to the authoritarian traditions of the army and the east. France inclines more to the parliamentary west, tempered by the man-on-horseback appeal of the Napoleons, Boulangers, and deGaulles.

All lawful civilized government, whether republic or monarchy, needs both liberals and conservatives, just as a well-functioning automobile needs both brakes and gas. Radicalism may be defined as a car going full speed ahead without brakes. Reaction may be defined as a car with the brakes jammed on so tight that it cannot move at all.

The British Lord Chancellor Viscount Jowitt once remarked, "No one can define a pretty girl; but, thank heaven, we all know one when we see her." Likewise, it has never been possible consistently to define and distinguish "liberal" and "conservative"; yet voters and historians usually manage to know them in practice. The difficulty is not the lack of definitions but the superfluity of definitions, often by abstract and doctrinaire theorists. The definitions of these two isms vary so widely because they depend:

(1) on which country of Europe is under discussion;

(2) on which decade of history is under discussion;

(3) on which particular issue is under controversy.

For example, what is conservative in nineteenth-century western Europe (England or France) would seem daringly liberal in eastern Europe, especially in tsarist Russia. In turn, what is liberal in western Europe today (for example, liberal capitalist democracy) would seem reactionary to the twentieth-century of the Soviets, and would have seemed radical to the more feudal Russia of the tsars. Even within the Anglo-American west, time changes the meaning of these words. Twentieth-century New Deal liberals repudiate with a shudder, as somewhat to the right of Herbert Hoover, the middle-class laissez-faire capitalism of Gladstone (1809-98), founder of the British Liberal Party.

Nonetheless, "liberal" has certain enduring connotations since the days of the eighteenth-century rationalists and the nineteenth-century utilitarians. These connotations apply both to the Gladstonian "bourgeois" liberal and the modern anticapitalist liberal. Liberalism connotes an optimistic secular religion of progress; sometimes, but not always,

materialistic, hedonistic, and pragmatic; surely generous and idealistic, yet striking the conservative as often blind to the lessons of history. The conservative of the school of Edmund Burke (1727-97), Metternich (1773-1859), and Disraeli (1804-81) insists—often overinsists—on the need for unbroken organic continuity of historic development. The conservative opposes not all innovations but those innovations that are abstractly "enlightened" but in practice unworkable and disruptive because they have not evolved from the solid roots of past experience. That able Gladstonian liberal John Morley (1838-1923; Secretary of State for India, 1905-10) has given us an amusingly devastating definition of one kind of conservative:

> . . . with his inexhaustible patience for abuses that only torment others; his apologetic words for beliefs that may not be so precisely true as one might wish, and institutions that are not altogether so useful as some might think possible; his cordiality towards progress and improvement in a general way, and his coldness or antipathy to each progressive proposal in particular; his pygmy hope that life will one day become somewhat better, punily shivering by the side of his gigantic conviction that it might well be infinitely worse.

It was mentioned earlier that different kinds of liberals may be distinguished from different kinds of conservatives according to which of various issues are under controversy. These issues include the following in both American and European disputes:

(1) tempo of social change;

(2) need for tradition;

(3) faith in the masses and in the natural goodness of man;

(4) feasibility of changing human nature;

(5) importance of utilitarian motives (economics vs. "ideas" in history);

(6) risk of extending full democratic privileges even to those engaged in forcibly destroying democracy;

(7) conflict between liberty and a leveling equality;

(8) absoluteness or relativeness of existing restraints and standards.

In ordinary times these eight issues justify vigorous disagreement and debate. They do not justify hotheaded suicidal disunity in these extraordinary times when parliamentary conservatives and parliamentary liberals must cooperate against an unappeasable communist police-state that would exterminate both.

II

The European catastrophe of 1789-1848, without which the ruthless militarism of 1870 would not have triumphed, is the mutual destruction of liberalism and conservatism between those two famous revolutions. Between 1789 and 1848, international liberalism and international conservatism, instead of uniting against militarist nationalism, fought some sixty years of civil war, interrupted by truces but never by real peace. First they fought each other in the wars of the French Revolution and Napoleon; then in the European revolutions of 1820, 1830, 1848. Thereby each undermined the other's claims to the allegiance of that ancient international community known as Europe. Result: the international community of Europe, based on Hellenic, Roman, Judaic, and Christian traditions, ceased to exist. It broke up into exclusively national loyalties, a process that triumphed partly in 1848 and wholly in 1870, culminating in the two most destructive wars in history.

For this catastrophe, liberals and conservatives were both to blame. Conservatives, not in England but in Eastern and Central Europe, were too static and reactionary. They failed to see that timely reform (as the Austrian minister Metternich vainly warned his bigoted monarchs) was the only way to prevent revolution. In turn liberals—except in England, Scandinavia, Switzerland, etc.—were too breathlessly rapid and revolutionary. They failed to learn what an English Fabian Socialist has called "the inevitability of gradualness." Especially in eastern and central Europe, they scorned the English liberal concept of "His Majesty's loyal opposition." This in turn was more than half the fault of majesties who, like Alexander III of Russia, stubbornly treated even enlightened opposition as disloyal.

Either group, either international middle-class republican liberalism or international aristocratic Hapsburg conservatism, would have been better for the cause of peaceful international European unity than the militarist, racist nationalism that triumphed when these two rival internationalists destroyed each other.

Bonar Law (Conservative premier of England, 1923) once shocked a Conservative Party rally by giving a refreshingly facetious and irreverent definition of the two isms. Explaining that the difference was one of outlook rather than concrete program and that the real opposition was between the right and left wings within each opposing party, Bonar Law

informed his pious Conservative audience that they had all the stupid people on their side and the Liberals had all the cranks. In practice, the regular six-year alternation in office between the forward dashes of the clever "cranks" and the brake action of the solid "stupid people," has enabled England to "muddle through" with amazing success in maintaining civic peace and parliamentary government. Unfortunately foreign policy, being too delicate and too dangerous for muddling, has been most unsuccessful in twentieth-century Britain.

Let us quote at some length from one of the most perceptive analyses of this problem ever written, an analysis insufficiently known. In his book *The New Leviathan*, 1942, that wise historian and philosopher R. G. Collingwood explained the secret of England's successful parliamentary government as follows:

> For most of the [nineteenth] century English political life was dominated by two parties, Liberal and Conservative. . . . To hasten the percolation of liberty throughout every part of the body politic was the avowed aim of the Liberal party; to retard it was the avowed aim of the Conservative party. . . . They were not fundamentally in disagreement. Both held it as an axiom that the process of percolation must go on. . . . Both knew that if it were too fast, and equally if it went too slow, the whole political life of the country would suffer. . . . Conservative policy was *not to stop* the vehicle but to slow it down when it seemed likely to go too fast.
>
> . . . It is easy to bring *two* opposite criticisms against the two-party system. Each criticism *conceals a desire for tyranny:*
>
> (1) *First, that the parties are rivals*, wasting in friction energy that would be more usefully spent in getting ahead with the work. But the two parties were not rivals. . . . They were united, and consciously united, in work which everyone in those days considered important: controlling the rate at which freedom percolated through the body politic. What the partisan of tyranny objects to is that freedom should percolate at all. . . .
>
> (2) *Secondly, that the parties were not rivals*; that they merely posed as rivals, wasting energy in a pretense at rivalry. They were combining, says one [communism], to exploit the proletariat. They were combining, says another [fascism] or perhaps the same, to bolster up a cretinous parliamentary system. . . . But the two parties, though agreed on fundamentals, differed in function. One was charged by common consent with seeing that the process did not fall below the optimum velocity; the other that it did not exceed it. So two barristers may agree in resolving that justice shall be done; but they are charged with seeing that the court shall know what there is to be said for the plaintiff and for the defendant respectively.
>
> The most remarkable event in our political history during the twentieth

century has been the eclipse of the Liberal party. Why did it happen? In a dialectical system it is essential that the representatives of each opposing view should understand why the other view must be represented. . . . The Conservative who described his party as a brake on the vehicle of progress understood that the vehicle must be propelled. Did any Liberal understand that it must have a brake? . . . I think not. . . . [Liberals] pictured themselves as dragging the vehicle of progress against the dead weight of human stupidity; and I think they believed Conservatives to be part of that dead weight. Conservatives understood that there must be a party of progress. Liberals, I think, never understood that there must be a party of reaction. . . . That, I suggest, was why the Liberal party disappeared. It was not because the Labour party arose and by degrees took its place as the party of progress; if the Liberal party had known its business, it would have absorbed the Labour party instead of being replaced by it. It was because the Liberals did not understand the dialectic of English politics.

III

In America a fascinating confusion has resulted from the fact that popular journalists improperly apply the term "conservative" to the laissez-faire economics which our Old Guard Republicans and N.A.M. have unconsciously derived from European liberalism.

It was Gladstone's Liberal Party, never the Conservatives, who espoused the laissez-faire, free trade, and free competition of Adam Smith and of the Manchester School. And on the continent, wherever the armies of the anticonservative French Revolution went, one of their first thoughts was to abolish the allegedly "outworn" guilds and establish laissez-faire. This was their means of establishing the middle class in power. It was one of their means, more effective than their guillotine, of overcoming the antibourgeois workers, aristocrats, peasants, and kings, with their systems of the just price, medieval guilds, or modern trade unions, as well as mere feudal restraint.

The liberation of capitalist energies and the strict legal ban on trade unions was one of the few consistent aspects of the French Revolution, from Jacobins and Girondists through the Directorate. Everyone knows the guillotine devoured aristocrats, espousing monarchy, and the priests, espousing ultramontanism. It is often forgotten today that the Jacobin guillotine of Robespierre and the rest was likewise devouring countless workingmen espousing trade unions. (Cf. the researches of Professor

R. R. Palmer of Princeton University on Jacobin laissez-faire capitalism and Jacobin execution of worker representatives.)

Neither then nor today has the middle-class businessman succeeded in convincing either workers, farmers, priests, or aristocrats of the mystical, self-regulating perfection of laissez-faire. Instead, humane social laws—whether for "radical" or "medieval" reasons—were increasingly introduced throughout the nineteenth century. Some were introduced by pressure from radical worker-groups. Some were introduced by the great humanitarian Tory aristocrats of the 1830's and 1840's, like the Seventh Earl of Shaftesbury.

The humane curtailing of a callous laissez-faire, the improvement of British factory conditions, and the reduction of hours of work for women and children have even been called the "revenge" of the Tory aristocrats for the middle-class Whig Reform Bill of 1832. But neither revenge motives nor the shallow materialism of a Karl Marx are needed to account for modern social reform. Social reform would have come anyway, and will come anyway, so long as enough rich men and enough poor men believe deeply enough in the traditional Christian ethics to apply it also to economics.

Laissez faire has had to give way to social reform and to restraints on an anarchic capitalism whenever workers and aristocrats have joined forces. Examples are the "Tory socialism" of Disraeli, the antifascist democratic Conservatism of Churchill, certain phases of the mellow Hapsburg monarchy, and the New Deal of that fabulous character straight from Disraeli's *Coningsby*: the aristocratic Squire of Hyde Park. Far from being Marxist or necessarily revolutionary or leftist, a compassionate and humane approach to economic suffering is the logical outgrowth of the oldest Christian, Jewish, and Hellenic ethics. This holds true from the reforms of the democratic aristocrat, Pericles, in free Athens right through the encyclical *De Rerum Novarum* of Pope Leo XIII on working conditions in 1891 and through such profound Protestant theologians as Reinhold Niebuhr, whose honorable and admirable liberalism sounds often like healthy, old-fashioned conservatism, in contrast with that other kind of "liberalism," against which his resignation of 1951 from the masthead of *The Nation* was so dramatic a protest.

Social reforms do indeed become perniciously Marxoid, collectivist, totalitarian, or in the narrow sense "socialist," when they go too far across

the "statist line" and threaten civil liberties and a responsible individualism with the curse of statism. With its dangerous and economically needless nationalizing of steel, the British Labor Government crossed the statist line. That line may be defined as the line beyond which liberty is sacrificed to security. The Fair Deal and New Deal have crossed it only partly, far less than alleged by the Old Guard and the N.A.M. but sufficiently far to require a more alert populace and a more vigilant opposition party.

The only electable Republican alternative to the Fair Deal and New Deal lies not in a return to Coolidge and Harding laissez-faire. It lies in the kind of program represented by serious responsible leaders like Governors Warren and Driscoll, and Senators Duff, Lodge, Saltonstall, Aiken, and Margaret Smith, Representative Clifford Case, and Republican heirs of Willkie and Vandenberg internationalism. Such an enlightened Republicanism may now seem a relatively weak minority in the party; but the discrediting of the Asia Firstism of Taft and MacArthur and the adherence of Eisenhower to the Republicans, would bring their enlightened minority into a much-needed national leadership.

Such Republicanism would be represented by the *New York Herald Tribune*, not by the *Chicago Tribune*. It would continue the New Deal tradition of government inspection of industry but not as a punitive expedition nor with class-war bias. It would oppose further state ownership and anything smacking of the disastrous nationalizations of the Labor government across the Atlantic. But it would keep the New Deal humane social laws on the books and practice them. In the last analysis, Christian ethics must always be put above profit-materialism, in public economics as much as in private life. But this can be accomplished with a more decentralized and more bi-partisan administration, so as to halt the bureaucratic statism now building up in Washington after too many years under a single party.

What strange historical bed-fellowship when our Old Guard's laissez-faire economics is called "conservative"! Its economics comes straight from those eighteenth-century "Reds," the Jacobin revolutionary terrorists. To regulate society for the commercial class, as both Robespierre and Senator Taft have attempted in their different ways, is as pernicious as the leftist or socialist tyranny of regulating society for the proletariat—or for any other fraction of society. Both liberalism and conservatism at their

best are concerned with the progress or conservation, respectively, of society *as a whole* rather than of any one class or pressure group.

In that fact lies the justification of European monarchy and aristocracy, especially the British monarchy: at their best, they represent not class interests but society as a whole. (When they fail to do so, they become quite properly discredited and overthrown.) Their function is a needed one, the function of unification and social cement and moderation and mediation. Instead of sneering at the valuable function of European constitutional monarchies and aristocracies as if they were mere snobbery and luxury, American liberals should try to insure that this same mediating, nonpartisan, non-election-bound function is also achieved in our country. In our case it can be, and has to be, achieved democratically and without hereditary aristocracies: by means of the Constitution and the Supreme Court.

Asked by President Teddy Roosevelt what was the justification of Austria's supposedly outdated and reactionary monarchy, the old Hapsburg emperor Francis Joseph replied: "to protect my people from their governments." Thus excesses of the various intolerant nationalities, excesses of various class groups and economic pressure-groups of right or left, could be moderated by the throne. The Czechs, for example—who overthrew the Hapsburg monarchy-of-mediation only to get the Nazi and Communist dictatorships-of-persecution—have learned this lesson now; Benes on his deathbed may have learned it; so have millions of living Europeans after Hitler and Stalin.

In America, anything approaching monarchy or hereditary power is out of the question, despite Hamilton's hopes. Here the same purpose is served by the Supreme Court, as guardian and interpreter of the Constitution, standing at least partly above parties, above the momentary excesses of heated elections, above momentary mob whims. "To protect my people from their governments": within such a framework, be it European monarchy or American Supreme Court and Constitution, the rivalry of the conservative and liberal halves of truth will mean not civil war or chaos, as in most of the rootless and traditionless democratic republics of Europe's continent, but gradual evolutionary progress, the synthesis of freedom and lawful order.

Liberalism *Versus* Conservatism

By HEINZ EULAU

One cannot but scrutinize with interest Peter Viereck's conservative apologia. For it represents, on careful analysis, the very difficulties from which Viereck seeks to retrieve conservatism. That the modern case for conservatism must be considered a failure from the liberal point of view does not, of course, imply a disparagement of the argument that Viereck puts forward. Certainly, the intrinsic tolerance of his position clearly puts him into the ranks of men of good will. But, unfortunately, good will is often not enough to give solid foundations to political discourse. It is the basic infirmity of the argument, then, and not the argument itself, that suggests some critical observations.

Viereck's case, as one should expect from one who is deeply concerned, has all the earmarks of what is best in intellectual conservatism. There is, first of all, that profound sense of historical continuity which characterizes the conservative attitude—a state of mind which, by virtue of its own definition, must seek in history explanatory principles. But this attitude, so explicit in Viereck's argument, presents a real dilemma. For it requires the kind of question which conservatism assumes to have answered: just what relevance do the experiences of a Burke, a Metternich or a Disraeli have for modern conservatism? Or what purpose is served by demonstrating the angelic nature of conservative policies in some countries during the nineteenth century if it is quite apparent, as Viereck points out, that Mr. Taft, the National Association of Manufacturers and the *Chicago Tribune* aren't angels?

The source of the dilemma, of course, is this: that history as such does not give, as conservatives would have it, clear-cut answers to those questions of value which are at the core of the political process. The appeal to history is essentially spurious. For the very selection of the facts, so-called, which constitute history is largely determined by the values one holds—and the conservative, like everybody else who appeals to history, does just that: he selects those facts that please his value bias and, consequently, prove his case.

Not that history as the record of human adaptation should not be searched for whatever light it may throw on modern perplexities. But history is a dangerous muse, and the list of her sins is a long one: omission, commission, distortion, misinterpretation and many other errors, whether intentional or not, ever lurk in the historical approach to questions of social policy. Moreover, the particular technique most often used in his search by the conservative historian—namely, extrapolation of those trends which would seem to vindicate what Viereck calls the "unbroken organic continuity of historical development"—is simply inadequate to guarantee valid results. This kind of apparently naked trend-thinking, actually shot through with value premises and uncontrolled by criteria of scientific method, is probably the weakest link in the conservative approach to political reality.

One example from Viereck's argument will suffice to indicate the uncontrolled nature of conservative historicism. Our troubles in the field of international relations, according to Viereck, are due to "the European catastrophe of 1789-1848, without which the ruthless militarism of 1870 would not have triumphed. . . ." Let us note the procedure implicit in this statement: first, the attribution of a value to a historical sequence, characterized by the negative symbol "catastrophe"; then the imputation of a causal relationship between this negatively described sequence of events and the equally negative event of 1870 characterized as "ruthless imperialism." Everything else follows from this apparently "unbroken organic continuity of historic development." Now, to a liberal interpreter, the historical sequence 1789 to 1848 may not at all appear as one of "catastrophe," but rather as a period of great promise and achievement: the destruction of an ancestral order which, in spite of the efforts of the Holy Alliance to restore the principle of a divinely ordained legitimacy, culminated in the emergence of modern constitutionalism and the beginnings of the democratic suffrage.

Liberalism, in contrast to conservatism, is akin to the scientific method rather than to historicism. It represents an approach to reality which, in the words of the late Morris Cohen,

> is based on a critical attitude to all plausible and self-evident propositions. It seeks not to reject them, but to find out what evidence there is to support them rather than their possible alternatives. This open eye for possible alternatives, each to receive the same logical treatment before we can determine which is the best grounded, is the essence of liberalism in art, morals, and politics.

History is a two-edged sword and while slaying the dragon, conservatives are prone to injure, if not exterminate, themselves. And a conservative like Viereck seems to sense it, even if he cannot consciously admit it. To reinforce their case conservatives must supplement the principle of historical continuity with another principle, that of respect for established institutions, especially religion and property. It implies a recognition of the inertia of social arrangements which, being deeply embedded in the cake of custom, can and consequently should be changed only with great caution. Hence, as Viereck suggests, "all lawful civilized government, whether republic or monarchy, needs both liberals and conservatives, just as a well-functioning automobile needs both brakes and gas."

A metaphor, to be sure, but one which hardly conceals another theoretical assumption that deserves analysis. Liberalism versus conservatism, Viereck believes, is not a battle between right and wrong, but a battle between right and right. And supporting his thesis with a stanza of those two keen political analysts, Gilbert and Sullivan, Viereck postulates that "each shares an equally needed half of a unifying psychological and political truth." To prove his point, Viereck cites the cases of some "healthy" societies where democracy has been attained, presumably because of the happy marriage of liberalism and conservatism. But it could be argued just as well that these societies have come to be what they are precisely because in the political battle of the nineteenth century liberalism won out over conservatism, and that the marriage finally consummated was of the nature of a *mariage de convenance*, with the conservative partner accepting the inevitable.

And why is it necessary to have two political creeds if their struggle is one between right and right? Viereck suggests that no healthy society can emerge if conservatives are too static and reactionary, and liberals are too breathlessly rapid and revolutionary. But one wonders as to just what, then, the difference is between liberals and conservatives as conceived by Viereck, short of some kind of character difference which makes some people liberal and others conservative, depending on the inequitable distribution of certain traits and qualities among people. This kind of psychological analysis which seeks to relate beliefs to character structure is a credible one, though it is not clear whether Viereck has it in mind. In any case, had it not been for the absence of

such a distribution of traits, it might have happened, according to Viereck, that

> either group, either international middle-class republican liberalism or international aristocratic Hapsburg conservatism, would have been better for the cause of peaceful international European unity than the militarist, racist nationalism that triumphed when these two rival internationalists destroyed each other.

Quite apart from the fact that this kind of historical hindsight is tortuous, it hardly serves the purpose of elucidating just what separates a liberal from a conservative.

Ralph Waldo Emerson, who never allowed his radical transcendentalism to interfere with his political realism, saw the matter quite differently:

> The two parties which divide the state, the party of Conservatism and that of Innovation, are very old, and have disputed the possession of the world ever since it was made. . . . Such an irreconcilable antagonism of course must have a corresponding depth of seat in the human constitution. It is the opposition of Past and Future, of Memory and Hope, of the Understanding and the Reason. It is the primal antagonism, the appearance in trifles of the two poles of nature. . . . Innovation is the salient energy; Conservatism is the pause on the last movement. . . . Conservatism stands on man's confessed limitations, reform on his indisputable infinitude.

Emerson, especially in the last sentence just quoted, probably comes closer to a psychological truth than Viereck—a truth which, were it really so, would give conservatism a permanent edge over liberalism. But rather than being a truth, it is only a prejudice which was expressed with brutal frankness by that great American conservative, Alexander Hamilton, in the famous statement: "Your people, Sir, is a great beast."

Of course, to an enlightened and democratic conservative like Viereck such blatant disdain of the masses cannot possibly be acceptable. Yet, distrust of human will and reason as well as a certain reluctance to underwrite human nature is a third principle that distinguishes conservative thinking. This principle underlies the concept of "trust" so often found in conservative writings from Edmund Burke down to Quintin Hogg. It gives sustenance to the conservative's moral satisfaction which, by assigning to each person his proper station in life, conceives of society as a hierarchy of ranks. If those in the higher ranks enjoy definite rights and privileges, their possession involves a public trust.

Reasoning along this line seems to be the underpinning of Viereck's contention that "the conservative opposes not all innovations but those innovations that are abstractly 'enlightened' but in practice unworkable and disruptive because they have not evolved from the solid root of past experience." As the self-appointed custodian of this experience, the conservative is apparently accountable—though conservative literature never specifies exactly to whom—for protecting his less intelligent fellow men against their own aberrations and excesses which are inevitable in view of the frailty of human nature.

It is perfectly true that conservatives do not oppose all innovations and that they may introduce, for a variety of reasons and under varying pressures, many humane social laws. But, historically speaking, it is even more accurate to say that conservatives do not oppose innovations in practice, provided they can retain those privileges and advantages traditionally enjoyed by a relatively small elite, for instance, ownership of big landed estates as the material basis of aristocracy, or the undisturbed inheritance of great fortunes as the material basis of plutocracy. Moreover, in order to keep the record straight, it should also be added that at one time or another conservatives opposed as purely "abstractly enlightened" a great many reforms which have become firmly enshrined in the social structure since. For instance, the conservative resistance to and attacks on such matters as universal suffrage or the equality of the sexes represented lively battles which engaged men's political efforts for many decades.

Inasmuch as conservatism is welfare-oriented, this orientation leans heavily toward an ethical philanthropy—the kind of responsibility that springs from the conception of *noblesse oblige* rather than from a deep respect for the worth and dignity of all men. Factory legislation in England, for instance, had conservative support because such support was in harmony with the best traditions of an earlier paternalistic rule, and it agreed with the religious convictions of men like Lord Shaftesbury. Indeed, here one finds the source of the basically religious attitude of modern social-minded conservatism which Viereck expresses when he writes that "social reform would have come anyway, and will come anyway, so long as enough rich men and enough poor men believe deeply enough in the traditional Christian ethics to apply it also to economics." Whether or not the alliance between aristocrats and workers, temporarily

occurring in nineteenth-century England to restrain the worst features of an anarchic capitalism, can be a universal relationship, as Viereck would seem to wish, is a highly speculative proposition. The rise of the Labor Party in England would seem to controvert it.

The inherent weakness of the conservative position becomes even more apparent when a conservative like Viereck seems to cope with the well-known difficulties of contemporary American conservatism. The attack on liberalism fails because conservatism really has nothing that could fill the void which would be left by liberalism's defeat. Hence, the attack itself is weak, much weaker than those self-strictures for which liberals are known. "Social reforms," writes Viereck, "do indeed become perniciously Marxoid, collectivist, totalitarian, or in the narrow sense 'socialist,' when they go too far across the 'statist line' and threaten civil liberties and a responsible individualism with the curse of statism." In a sentence such as this Viereck deserts the market place of ideas in which conservatives and liberals can talk it out through cool political analysis, and he engages in a most vulgarly fuzzy kind of name-calling. Nor does Viereck contribute to political analysis by the vague definition of the "statist line" as "the line beyond which liberty is sacrificed to security." Clearly, missing here are those operational indices which alone can give meaning to abstractions like liberty, security, statism or responsible individualism.

One can ask, for instance, why the nationalization of the British steel industry means crossing the "statist line," and why the nationalization of the power industry does not? Obviously, the content of whatever operational indices one might choose in order to define the verbal vagaries of politics would change from time to time. In general, such indices are relative and arbitrary. One is reminded of the arguments of Mr. Joseph H. Choate who in 1895 succeeded in convincing the Supreme Court of the United States of the conservative opinion that a federal income tax law was communistic in tendency and hence unconstitutional. Actually, by succumbing to his own vociferation Viereck fails to meet head-on the dilemma of conservative politics: for the fact is that through the last 150 years conservatism has had to live with a paradox, namely, the paradox of progressive adjustment to an ever-receding "statist line." Though Viereck does not seem to be aware of it, it is just this paradox which is a credit to conservative sagacity: in practice conservatives deal with the

"statist line" less as a Maginot frontier and more as a "defense in depth" that permits strategic withdrawals as long as there is time left to withdraw. If anything, this strategy may account for the amazing survival power and strength of British Toryism.

No wonder that without such awareness of what makes British conservatism tick Viereck's program for conservative politics in America suffers from anemia. He believes that the New Deal and the Fair Deal have crossed the "statist line" only partly, "far less than alleged by the Old Guard and the N.A.M. but sufficiently far to require a more alert populace and a more vigilant opposition party." Enlightened Republicanism, he suggests, "would continue the New Deal tradition of government inspection of industry. . . . It would oppose further state ownership and anything smacking of the disastrous nationalizations of the Labor government across the Atlantic." Is Viereck shadow-boxing, or does he really mean what he says? Just what does "furthering" state ownership in America mean? What there is of such ownership in the United States —atomic energy installations, naval shipyards or electric power dams— has surely not been at the expense of free private enterprise. Nor is such "furthering" advocated by even the most liberal wing of the Democratic Party. Moreover, Viereck seems to overlook the fact that some of the most enlightened Republican Senators, with whom he evidently identifies himself, have been among the staunchest supporters of much of President Truman's most liberal legislation in Congress, while some of the most trusted Democratic wheelhorses have often opposed their party leader's program.

It seems that somewhere in the course of his apologia Viereck forgot the courageous words with which he began to present his case. Certainly, one could not but agree with his censure of the American party system if one were to accept his demand for clearly discernible parties along a liberal-conservative continuum. But Viereck himself fails to contribute to such clarification. Indeed, he adds to the confusion by his insistence that somehow liberalism and conservatism are both right, that they are merely two sides of the same coin. "Both liberalism and conservatism," he writes, "at their best are concerned with the progress or conservation, respectively, of society *as a whole* rather than of any one class or pressure group." The trouble with this analysis, of course, is that in practice liberalism and conservatism are rarely "at their best," and it is just this circum-

stance, among others, which makes the American party system what it is—a playing ground on which pressure groups seek to outwit each other in the struggle for special privileges.

And yet, from what one knows about both major parties during the last forty years, it would seem that liberalism as represented, with all its weaknesses, by a fairly large sector of the Democratic Party, and only by a very small group in the Republican Party, has been more often "at its best" than the conservatism that can be found in both parties. Indeed, this is the very reason why a liberal can support the Democratic Party in good conscience, while a conservative of Viereck's enlightened position must find the G.O.P.-dominated Republican Party a most dismal company. And it is even unlikely that an Eisenhower or Warren or Duff in the White House would change the conservative prospect very much. But that is another story.

* * *

The Other Story

By PAUL BIXLER

It is a temptation to comment at length on the conservative-liberal conflict-collaboration pattern presented so vigorously by Mr. Viereck and Mr. Eulau. Except for a few preliminary remarks, however, I prefer to examine briefly the meaning of that pattern as it may apply to the coming 1952 elections.

Concerning the conservative values in the Europe of the nineteenth century, it seems to me that Eulau has somewhat the better of the argument. Yet he does not seem so successful when he discusses the same values in America (and principally, I believe, for the same reason). For example, there is no more lucid, compact statement about the conservative-liberal dichotomy in either essay than the quotation from Emerson, but just how Eulau gets from Emerson's "truth" to Alexander Hamilton's "prejudice" is not clear.

Viereck's sentence beginning "Social reform would have come anyway . . ." is particularly disturbing, even maddening, to a liberal like

Eulau, for it holds the suggestion that social conflict doesn't count, that organizations for political and social action (pressure groups) don't really move society forward. If they don't, then American political history has been pretty much a series of frustrations.

But how does Eulau reply? In part he offers a skeptical examination of the conservatives' claim to the custodianship of past experience, to the concept of public "trust," and to *noblesse oblige*—an answer which applies much more to past European experience than to present American.

The claim to these "possessions" cannot seriously be made except by an hereditary aristocracy founded on landed estates or other substantial property. Tested by recent American experience, it is a claim so obviously weak that it is never publicly expressed. There is no landed American aristocracy, and by and large, those who have inherited a running start on their careers through family or other connections compete on fairly even terms with those from the wrong side of the tracks. What common pattern of attitude and thought is to be found in such American "aristocrats" as Averell Harriman, the Taft brothers, the Rockefellers, Franklin Roosevelt, Henry Ford II? Moreover, do even the most levelling of democrats seriously (morally and politically) prefer *en bloc* the life patterns of such typical but diverse self-made Americans as Tom Girdler, Roy Howard, John L. Lewis, Walter Reuther, "Electric Charley" Wilson? To attempt the designation of liberals and conservatives in either of these groups on the basis of hereditary privilege (or the lack of it) appears impossible. The good liberal does not want hereditary privilege to dominate the social and political scene, but presumably he is not so doctrinaire as to prefer that all leadership be recruited from the woodlot or the work bench.

Early in his essay, Viereck expresses fear of the breakdown of parliamentary democracy into a "hotheaded suicidal disunity." He appears to miss something of a bet here. For this suggests that the one issue upon which all true liberals and conservatives might heartily unite is civil liberties. In a time of conflict with dictatorship, keeping open the channels of thought, discussion and social action comes just about at top priority. But Viereck argues that the blame for disunity lies with the Truman administration for having occasionally "crossed the statist line." Would he then argue that the Democrats are also responsible for McCarthyism? Civil liberties are quite as central to democratic procedure

as nongovernmental enterprise, and no other issue seems quite so positive as a rallying point for liberal-conservative collaboration.

Politically speaking, it is a little difficult to place Viereck. Unsympathetically, he might be considered a minority liberal Republican or a good conservative without a party. Like many Americans, he favors a vigorous two-party system, but would he urge anyone to vote for Senator Taft for President, simply to maintain that system? There is no indication in his article that he conceives of Taft as the leader of American conservatism, but time marches on. Mr. Republican has always had his following, his book on foreign policy indicates minor changes in attitude, and some "internationalist" opinions now express a lingering hope that he may change some more and give off an air of defeatism that here's the man we may have to deal with as President after all. Viereck's article would have been stronger as of today if he had given Taft somewhat more attention. (Presumably he will do so in his book.)

On the other hand, Eulau is a good Democrat at a time when the Democrats have not distinguished themselves in a liberal manner. Politically the country is at present on a kind of dead center. Paradoxically, conservatism and liberalism have become too baldly symbolized in the persons and in the long-time conflict, respectively, of Taft and Truman. If we must choose between them in 1952, many will vote for Truman again—but without enthusiasm. The Fair Deal has been introduced before without anything happening. (In contrast, Tom Dewey accomplished something with F.E.P.C., and not solely because he had different material to work with.) Few relish the political distraction of an ambassadorial appointment to the Vatican—one more issue likely to degenerate into a chronic sore. And who likes graft—petty or grand?

Yes, plenty of disillusioned voters will take Truman if Taft is the alternative. But many would prefer Eisenhower—or even Governor Warren (who, crazily enough, was at least once nominated as a Democrat in California). Eisenhower would provide an approach to unity—and in this election the country could use a measure of unity. We need a new lift, a refocus, or a fresh synthesis of the old issues symbolized in the Taft-Truman, conservative-liberal conflict. For one thing, McCarthyism must be destroyed. And this is not a partisan matter. For it accomplishes little if the Republican McCarthy is discredited and the Democrat McCarran continues free to carry the slander further. Eisenhower's dignity

and prestige would be a powerful bulwark against McCarthyism on all fronts.

And of course, there is the matter of international policy—so obvious that it needs no retelling here.

But the fact is that no one needs to argue for Eisenhower in these days. He can be elected if nominated—by either party. And if nominated first by the Republicans, he *could* be nominated also by the Democrats. (Truman does not want to run against him, and for that matter, what other Democrat does? It was Senator Douglas who first suggested that both parties nominate the same man for President.) The contest, then, would be over the Congress and in a mild degree over the vice-presidency.

Such a development, breaking both shibboleths and precedents, could hardly be explained by the rules of either history or political science. It would not necessarily be best in the long run for American political health. But that it is eminently possible today throws an infra red light on what Viereck and Eulau are talking about.

The Trace

By HOWARD GRIFFIN

The wayfarer hearing the faroff sea
the watermusic that is like the sound
of the earth falling, infinite, aloof,
the planet turning on its worn white pole,
moving through the green
medium, loses identity.
Will he drift long? Can he ghost forever?
Now he knows the excellence of touch,
the truth, the dream of being alive,
reactive to the amniotic sack,
tideborne he becomes all sur-
face, sure of impinging sea.
While the blue hills dislimn from sight

HOWARD GRIFFIN's poems have appeared before in the ANTIOCH REVIEW. He continues to publish poetry and prose in a variety of periodicals, including *Resistance* and the *Saturday Review of Literature*.

he trembles to the verge
of consciousness. Rights himself,
returns to the pale impact of the beach
and the disordered drift of love.
Whatever happens to the wayfarer
is a register of being—
this footprint graven on the sand
that in the future may become a fuel.
Not changed. The lonely man extends
his hand to touch. By touch alone the *leidyi**
is hurt and in the dimness flashes its green light
luminous as the filaments of a bulb,
breathing like ghostly lung or thread of gilt.
Before the hand was here to grasp,
this was. . . . Watching the progress of the crab,
the wayfarer would help it with a prod. . . .
Frequent in these later days he finds
himself the crab, himself the jellyfish.
Empires, war, all the strife
of two thousand years become
in his mind the pressure of a layer
of stone upon a layer of stone
preserved in the dark leaf of silt
on which his heelprint, cigarettes,
a whelk and key have wrought inlay.
Seeing his real self and his pedate mark
together, moving from the strand
he knows he has a skeleton in-
set, a fossil seal that he
will carry upright till he die.
Shell-held within the dark whorls of his brain
he hears again the *radotage* of reeds,
murder of kings, historic shocks of men
less than the dunes' bedding, or the wind.

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*The rainbow jellyfish, a primitive form of life, delicately formed and easily injured. At night it gives off a vivid green phosphorescence when disturbed.

A STORY

The Passionate Shepherd

By SAMUEL YELLEN

HAVE YOU EVER STOPPED in the middle of a sentence to see if the person you were talking to was paying any attention? I don't recommend it, unless you brace yourself beforehand for a jolt. That is precisely what I did at a cocktail party last October, seven months ago. I was engaged in conversation with a good-looking young brunette, Rose Matthews, whose husband had just joined our faculty. I even remember (as if I could forget) what I was saying at the time, though I hesitate to repeat it here. It was the sort of thing my friends the psychologists would call verbalizing, a piece of cocktail party prattle which I had lifted from Marlowe: "Come live with me, and be my love, and we will all the pleasures prove. And I assure you this passionate shepherd will——" Some sudden caprice which I still cannot account for made me break off at that point. To my chagrin, the Passionate Shepherd discovered that his love was simply not listening and Marlowe's poesy was wasted on the smoke-laden air. Her ears, her eyes, her whole being were bent elsewhere. What stood there before me was only the empty shell. And even though the shell itself was, as we say, not at all bad, being endowed, for example, with full and firm breasts, I must confess that Professor Cyrus Richard Gray suffered a sharp pain near the heart. Yes, it was a veritable stab of pain, and I am sure that I grew pale. At that moment, while a needle caught in a groove of my brain kept playing *pleasures prove pleasures prove pleasures prove pleasures prove,* I had my first intimation that I did not exist.

It was the usual faculty cocktail party held in the usual faculty home during the Saturday twilight after a football game. The furniture was all straight lines and angles in chromium plate and blond wood. On the walls hung the ubiquitous Sunflowers of Van Gogh, two studies of ballet girls by Degas, and a number of Cubist abstractions tardily executed in water colors by our hostess. Seen through the pall of cigarette smoke, the

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SAMUEL YELLEN's last fiction in these pages was "The Glass Jaw" (Spring, 1950). He teaches English at Indiana University.

fifty men and women standing jammed in the small living room and adjoining dining room were shades clamoring in the mists for a sip of the life-giving blood. Except that *these* shades were drinking Martinis and Manhattans. Perhaps my parallel is too lurid, and the illustrator should be not Doré, but Hogarth or Daumier. However, the scene was pathetic, almost tragic, rather than comic. The climate was one of desperation. But not the *quiet* desperation Thoreau speaks of. Far from it. Shrieks, screams, and squeals rebounded from wall and ceiling. Everyone seemed intent on a most frantic search for *something,* something without substance, without form, without name. Wives in their forties and fifties ogled, winked, grimaced, flirted with a frenzied gaiety, as if to give the lie to wrinkle, crow's foot, wattle, and hairy mole. Husbands with dewlap and sagging paunch embraced waists, only to recoil at flaccid breast or inflexibly ribbed girdle. Our host was busy saving on his liquor bill by going heavy on the vermouth. Our hostess, her face stamped with a bright fixed smile, was worrying about cigarette butts and spilled drinks, and wishing the party were over and done with. It was a motley assemblage, the kind you get when the hostess is wiping out her accumulation of social obligations in order to begin the new season with a clean sheet. Otherwise, how account for the presence of E. Feverell Dobson, Professor of Salesmanship (pause for raucous laughter) in our School of Commerce?

I realize that I must sound the petty academic snob indigenous to our large state universities. But that was not it at all. No, my attitude does not derive from the traditional respectability of my position as Professor of History (actually I took my doctorate at Harvard in American Civilization). Dobson *qua* Dobson is without significance in my story. True, he was hollow brass, undoubtedly an ignoramous, a hail fellow well met given to off-color limericks and guffaws. Likewise true, his title to local fame lay in a great collection of gaudy shirts and Countess Mara ties. Nevertheless, all of that was only his manner of saying to the world, *Regardez! I exist!* Others of my colleagues took other ways of making the same assertion. Some grew beards, some drove around in flashy yellow or crimson convertibles, some issued statements to the press, some dressed in tartan jackets, some cultivated eccentricities, some were constantly and ostentatiously off to Washington on mysterious topdrawer business, some never wore the same suit twice in a month, some never

wore anything but the same suit month after month. And even *my* own unobtrusive behavior and dress, invariably, like my name, a neutral gray which rendered me almost invisible against the academic foliage, may have been, after all, nothing more than the reverse side of the medal. Without getting hopelessly lost in the maze of the ego, who can be sure that Dobson was not right? At least, his brassy loudness was a sign of his *presence*. It indicated *his* existence. And certainly at this party he was the gorgeous prismatic cock around whom the silly hens fluttered.

Let me hasten to add that any bitterness expressed above was really a symptom of inner discontent and pain. In part, I suppose, it was pique at the fact that Rose Matthews was not even conscious of disregarding me. Perhaps mine was the occupational sensitivity of the professor. But I think not. It was something else. When Rose Matthews stood before me, all attention fixed, as if by a tropism, on E. Feverell Dobson, I suddenly was simply not there. She had wiped me out of existence. It happened to be a time when I was particularly vulnerable. I had just turned fifty-six. I was raw, without integument to shield me. No longer could I delude myself that the sixties, hemorrhages of the brain, palsy, and *finis* were not breathing hard down my neck. Of course, the handwriting had always been up there on the wall, but now, myopic as I might be, I had come close enough to read it. Moreover, the season of the year vibrated sympathetically, and each leaf falling desiccated and crumpled to the earth echoed my dismal thoughts. Standing there with the Matthews woman, I was stricken with panic. I looked across the room and observed my wife shrilling to some blurred figure who had an arm around her. During the rest of the party, I moved along, an automaton somehow making the expected response to the anticipated stimulus.

As we were driving home that evening, my wife said, "That Rose Matthews is an extremely attractive woman, don't you think?"

Before answering, I waited a minute as though to consider. "Yes, I suppose some would think she is."

I foresaw not only what Helen would say next, but the valiantly matter-of-fact tone she would employ. "Well, I noticed that the men seemed to be taken with her."

Why we skirmished thus I don't understand. I am sure that she could predict my reply and the inflection of my voice as accurately as I

could predict hers. Nevertheless, I pursed my lips and said, "She's a bit flamboyant for *my* taste, but *de gustibus*——" I shrugged my shoulders.

Helen should have known that the problem was not Rose Matthews, nor any of the other women whose sting she tried to neutralize by such epithets as "attractive" or "charming" or "beautiful." And yet, perhaps she did know well enough, and she was herself helpless before the compulsion to beat ineffectually against the ruins of time.

In the quiet streets, the lights of the car caught the leaves drifting down. There was no end to them, falling, falling, falling; and what they whispered as they fluttered in the air and their clatter as they dropped to the ground seemed, for the moment, to drown out the purr of the motor. In alarm I glanced quickly at Helen. She was staring ahead, her sharp chin lifted high to undo the half-a-century folds in her throat, her thin straight hair drawn close to the skull into a tight little knot at the back of her neck. My heart suddenly ached with pity. That face, which once launched a thousand ships each time I looked at it, now would no longer launch a single small vessel. And I remembered the fragrance of her young body when she first undressed for me, shy and yet in her pride wanting me to behold the flower which had bloomed in secret. Even that beauty had fallen victim to physiology and chemical equations. Maybe each commonplace reassurance I gave her helped temper the icy wind of truth. We had reached, I felt, a moment of high silent communion. But perversely that was the very moment Helen chose to turn eagerly to me. "Cy, I heard something interesting this afternoon. Guess who's going to get a divorce." I was not the sentient being, Cyrus Richard Gray. I was merely a patient and capacious ear to pour her post-party gossip into. Again I had the sensation that I did not exist.

That night at home I was unable to fall asleep. I lay in our bed as still as possible in order not to awaken Helen. The bed was spacious and obese, the kind without footboard called, I believe, a "Hollywood bed," which Helen had seen in *House Beautiful*. Had I not known her deficiency in the sense of humor, I might have thought she had got this voluptuous couch meant for an unmatrimonial orgy of fleshly passions as a piece of mockery for the decorous conjugality we had declined into. Getting up finally, I slipped out and closed the door carefully behind me. I tiptoed past the bedrooms of Joan and Ned, down the stairs, and into my study. There I sat for a time in a cocoon of silence trying to analyze

the disturbing sensation which had come on me. But the longer I pondered the more elusive became my identity. At last I went into the bathroom and got a sleeping pill to give myself the relief of temporary oblivion. As I was shutting the medicine cabinet, there in the mirror was my image. I studied it closely. Each separate item in the physiognomy was itself familiar enough—the rumpled and ragged slate-colored hair streaked with gray, the regularity of chin and nose, the pale gray eyes, the liverish skin. (Indeed, so ordinary were the items that I wished for a moment I might have some Dickensian grotesquerie of feature to serve as a handle for my identity, so that I might think of myself as the Man with the Red Bulbous Nose or the Man with the Black Beetling Brow.) And yet the total image was that of a stranger. There was about it a suggestion of distortion, as if the parts had been jarred slightly after being assembled, or as if the mirror had some minute flaws. I could not be sure whether the image represented reality or phantom. But I felt that I was on the verge of discovering the real person. Within that gray outwardness I seemed to remember a younger face and a boyish head. Underneath that cracked and peeling surface I thought I could almost see brighter and fresher colors. With a little more effort—no, it was no use. I kept slipping away from myself. And I could not persuade myself to believe that the stranger in the mirror existed. "Well," I said to him, "*gnothi seauton,* Passionate Shepherd, know thyself! That great Thespian, Cyrus Richard Gray, will now enact a little morality quaintly entitled *Passion Redivivus, or the Shepherd in Search of Himself.*

During the following days, while burning leaves spiced the air, a strange unrest took hold of me. My hands often trembled violently as they lifted a cup of coffee, a semaphore ticked unceasingly in my left eyelid, and fever patches blazed through the liverish skin over my cheekbones. I could not rid myself of the conviction that I had somehow, somewhere lost my inner self, that I was nothing but an empty container moving mechanically on fixed tracks. In my desperation, I crept back into the deepest recesses of the shell which had given me shelter in the past during fits of fluttering uncertainty. Like a neurotic straightening books, pictures, dishes, furniture in an effort to padlock his indefinable anxiety, I sought refuge in the formula of routine. Twenty-four years of treading the same invariable paths had rendered my motions automatic. In the

morning I met my freshman class in the Introduction to Western Civilization, my advanced class in The Experimental Society in America, or my graduate seminar in The Brook Farm Group, obediently opening and shutting my mouth to the tintinnabulation of bells. The rest of the morning was taken up with correspondence, reading blue books and term papers, conferring with students, and filling out the official forms that streamed from the robots over in Administration. At noon I lunched in the Faculty Club. After lunch I glanced at the *New York Times* or played a hand of bridge. Then came the period of the day, from one-thirty to four o'clock, which twenty years before I had dedicated to research. The small basement room in the Library where I spent those two and a half hours had become my second home. There every afternoon without fail I added the grain of sand to the slowly but steadily growing mound out of which had already come five monographs and nineteen shorter articles. The hour from four to five was given over to faculty meetings and committees. Dinner at home was followed by an evening concert, a lecture, a movie, a visit, or reading the *Saturday Evening Post* serial.

For how many thousands of days this not unpleasant routine had fitted me comfortably! Yet now I sank unaccountably into absent states, from which I would come to with the blood thundering to my head as after a faint. Fortunately (praise be to William James for Habit!) I always found myself performing the proper task at the customary time and place. Nevertheless, these spells worried me, and presently I realized that the Matthews woman was haunting my thoughts. Not, mind you, in the role of femme fatale, but rather as if she had stolen something I needed desperately to get back. It was this necessity, I suppose, which compelled me now and again to walk slowly past her house in one of the side streets off the campus. To my irrational temper, it seemed that the sight of her might restore whatever it was I had lost, might furnish me with the precious clue. At any moment during the day (even in the period sacrosanct to research), like a somnambulist, I would be driven to take my foolish peripatetic exercise. Of course, I never caught so much as a glimpse of Rose Matthews.

In my increasing agitation, there was no one I could turn to for help. Helen did look anxiously at me for a while. But I easily threw her off the scent by allowing myself to be caught in the kitchen furtively mixing

myself a bicarbonate of soda, and my malady was, I am sure, soon diagnosed and dismissed as a bout of indigestion. How long this state of affairs might have gone on I can only guess. For it came to an abrupt end one afternoon as I was seated in my basement cell at the Library (such is the treachery of the familiar) reading the letters of Charles Lamb. Unless my memory fails me, it was a letter to Coleridge. *Unless my memory fails me*—now there's an expression! Vestigium of exquisite academic dishonesty! Not only does my memory not fail me, but the very date of the letter—May 20, 1803—is engraved in red upon my private calendar. The fatal words sprang forward from the page to meet my eye: "He seems to have run the whole scenery of life, and now rests as the formal precisian of non-existence."

Even now, so ingrained are the accustomed academic gestures, I find myself obliged to explain why I was reading Lamb, what I was doing, as we like to say, outside my field. (As though it still matters that one of my colleagues might think I was spreading myself thin.) I must first make clear that my specialty is (or was) early Utopian experiments in America. Indeed, two of my monographs, those on New Harmony and Brook Farm, are, with all due modesty, not entirely unknown to the world of scholarship. At the time, I was following up some leads on the pantisocracy which Coleridge, Southey, and Lovell had planned to establish on the banks of the Susquehanna. Since many of Lamb's letters were written to Coleridge and Southey, I inevitably encountered the passage that was to open my eyes. For a minute, I recall, I took *precisian* to be a misspelling, until I realized that it was the noun not for the quality, but for the person. On the instant, I recognized that I had been brought unto Lamb to see what he would call me, and I had been named. I, *I*, Cyrus Richard Gray, was the formal precisian of non-existence. I was the vacant outline, with the Roman numerals, capital letters, Arabic numerals, and lower case letters all correctly indented and set forth. The *content* had faded out of the realm of being. I felt stagnant, lusterless, inert. My heart began to quiver. But that, I told myself, was only because the creature of habit was fearful at the threat to his smug routine. *Creature* of habit? No, I was simply the habit itself. I was that old coat which William James describes as falling into its habitual folds and wrinkles. And no one was inside.

As I sat with the volume of Lamb's letters open on the table before me, I looked around at the old familiar face of my cloister. *There* was the whole scenery of my life. The walls were painted a dull rough gray, and the surface bulged and billowed to the ridges and whorls of the plaster underneath. My long table, strewn with books, pamphlets, note cards, and pads of paper, stood in the center of the worn pine floor. The two large rickety bookcases were loaded with dusty books, piles of off-prints sent me by colleagues, and thirty or so of those mottled black-and-gray cardboard boxes, each neatly labeled, in which the industrious scholar files his note cards. Ah, those boxes! Those boxes! In them reposed what thousands upon thousands of cards, each one covered with my small precise backward-slanting hand. Cards of two sizes, two colors—three-by-five for bibliographical data, four-by-six for notes on my reading, white for the factual or objective, yellow for my own comments and suggestions. Over the years it had been my sustaining faith that each card contributed its mite to the sum total of human knowledge. What a silly farce—written, staged, played, and directed by Vanity! No, each card was the measure of a certain number of pulse beats lost and never to be recaptured. In those mottled black-and-gray caskets were interred the bones of my youth and enthusiasm. There came to my mind the story of the Harvard professor who, on his death, left hundreds of boxes and baskets of notes, choking his shelves and even suspended by pulleys from the ceiling. For his university they were an embarrassment, and not of riches. They were the indecent remains of a corpse which finally had to be disposed of hugger-mugger. I could imagine how, after my departure from this vale of tears, *my* boxes would perplex the university. What to do with them? Whom to entrust them to? Certainly my colleagues would want nothing to do with them: each one was diligently storing up his own boxes of note cards.

I went over to the window, whose sill was level with the ground, and looked through the ancient fly specks and grime. The cold November sun painted the skeleton trees upon the earth, with pen-and-ink punctilio for the filigree of twig. A host of shriveled brown leaves scuttled like chipmunks before the wind. Some students came along the campus walk outside the Library, the bare legs of the coeds smooth, strong, and shapely. I could almost hear the crunch of the dead leaves being trodden down by those merciless feet. No one is more aware than the college pro-

fessor of the hungry generations. No one can have a keener sense of how quickly and impatiently youth discards age. When it came my turn to go, who would there be to know the difference? Assuredly not my students. Those young egotists at the most egotistical hour of life hardly conceded existence to their teachers. Some of the more fatuous among my colleagues talked fervidly about *reaching* their students. I could not help remembering the student who had sat through an entire semester of my course under the impression that I was Professor *Thompson!* No, I could not flatter myself that I so much as cracked the glaze of those young egotists. And yet, distant as I was from my students, I was in many ways closer to them than to my own children. Joan and Ned no longer needed me. To them, I was an old stick of furniture that got in the way around the house. The language they spoke might as well have been one of those African tongues, all clicks and grunts. Joan, a senior at the university, was engaged to an accounting major, and already knew that callow brash stranger much better than she had ever known me. As for Ned, he was a sophomore wrapped up in his fraternity's hell week, pajama parties, and other such foolishness. Whenever I tried to enter their world, they merely waited with ill-concealed patience for me to make a more or less graceful exit.

Standing there at the window feeling a twinge of pity for old Shepherd Gray, I realized that I was whistling a tune under my breath while my fingers drummed a rhythm on the sill. The tune was very familiar, and yet I could not place it. Yes, a thing might be too familiar to be in focus. Surely, if anyone knew me, it was Helen. And yet I could go through a crisis like this without her being aware of it. While the tune teased me with its elusive familiarity, I let my thoughts play about Helen. She had been, in her way, a good wife and would, no doubt, notice my absence from the scene. But how soon she would get over it, and go on with her household concerns, her clubs, her teas, bridges, and luncheons. I watched the leaves scamper along outside. That tune nagged at me in a most distracting way. I recalled the cases of colleagues who had suddenly and inexplicably thrown overboard family, friends, position in the community, hard-earned academic security and reputation. Of Dewhirst, who had deserted a wife and three children to run off to Mexico with a coed. Of the professor of Latin whose name I had forgotten, who had joined an African safari and never returned. Of Templeton, who had

gone berserk and shot two of his colleagues. Of Baker, who had simply disappeared into the ether and left no trace. Somehow they were never the E. Feverell Dobsons, but always the quiet ones, the unobtrusive ones. About each one, the rest of us would shake our heads and ask over a cocktail glass, "What*ever* got into him?" Well, now I knew. Just then, I identified the nagging tune, and at the same moment I realized that the semaphore had stopped ticking in my left eyelid. It was a gay tune, the patter song from *The Mikado*. "He never would be missed," I sang aloud. "I'm sure he'd not be missed."

It is not at all difficult to disappear. Indeed, I believe that I could now write a successful handbook for weary academics on *How to Vanish and Leave Not a Rack Behind*. Of course, having time and place which I did not have to account for was of great help. No one ever questioned what I was doing each afternoon between one-thirty and four, and so seldom did anyone else, even the janitor, enter my basement room at the Library that I could have safely kept a chorus girl there. My preparations took only a few days and carried me into the first week of December. I had never realized that Professor Gray had it in him to be such a man of action. I withdrew five hundred dollars from the bank, knowing that Helen would not miss the money until the beginning of the next month. Then down on the levee (a row of secondhand stores, saloons, greasy-spoon restaurants, and disreputable hotels facing the railroad tracks) I bought an old brown suit, a battered brown hat, two woolen work shirts, a heavy sweater, a worn pair of brown shoes, and a cheap black cardboard suitcase, spreading my purchases over three stores. The chief risk I ran was getting these things into the Library. However, luck accommodated me. A little-used side door leads directly to the basement, and no one happened to see me enter that afternoon. My briefcase served to bring over some underwear, socks, and handkerchiefs, a few pieces each day.

On the appointed morning, as I said goodby to Joan and Ned and kissed Helen, I savored to the full the irony of being as perfunctory as usual. In fact, everything was as usual as usual, even the beating of my heart. I met my classes, answered some letters at the office, had lunch at the Faculty Club, played a hand of bridge, and strolled over to my secluded cloister. There I set about transforming myself. Most of my predecessors in the fine art of fading away into thin air had, I decided, tried

too hard to disguise themselves and, since nothing is so unoriginal as efforts at originality, had used the very ham-actor stencils foreseen by the police. My commonplace face and figure, my undistinguished dress and manner, the absence of any oddity of feature were in my favor. I did not resort to artificial scars, dark glasses, moustache, or limp. All I did was to remove my glasses and comb my hair in a pompadour instead of parting it as I ordinarily did. Then I changed to the woolen work shirt and brown suit and hat, and put the clothes I had been wearing into the suitcase. A study of my reflection in the grimy window showed me that the metamorphosis was adequate. I was still unobtrusive enough to be completely overlooked. Nevertheless, I must confess that my heart was thumping when I left the Library by the side door, carrying the suitcase. However, on the walk outside the door one of my colleagues passed by me without so much as a second glance. That restored my confidence.

Of course, I had already picked out my destination, and without hesitating I caught the bus which crosses the railroad tracks over into the West Side. During the 1880's and 1890's, that had been the fashionable section of town, and my interest in nineteenth-century domestic architecture had taken me there on occasional walks to view the dozen or so homes in the General Grant style still standing, though now converted into funeral parlors or rooming houses. One of the latter, need I say, was my *immediate* destination. Again luck was obliging to me, for I found a room at the first house I tried. I gave my name as George Brown and paid a week's rent in advance. The room, up in the square central tower which marks the General Grant house, was shabbily furnished, but clean enough, large, and well-lighted. For two weeks I holed up there, going out to the levee for my meals. Actually I did not stay close to my room, nor otherwise behave furtively. I took long walks through the streets of the West Side, over to the gas works, the cemetery, the furniture factory, or the slaughter house. I felt as if I were a tourist in a foreign town. And in a sense I was. For even a city of only sixty-three thousand is really a cluster of quite separate towns, each with its own economy, culture, social strata, flora and fauna.

My chief occupation was studying the local paper to keep track of my *alter idem*. It did not surprise me that my disappearance was not announced until the third day. I could surmise the quiet and discreet efforts of Helen and the university officials to locate me before deciding that

they could no longer put off calling the police in. After the news broke, I read and reread the accounts avidly. I enjoyed observing the skill of our publicity director, who always succeeded in balancing the disgrace to the university of having one of its professors turn into an irresponsible missing person by some reference to the "important" research done by the "noted authority" on early Utopian experiments. I had become a problem in public relations. I also enjoyed following the activities of the police, who broadcast descriptions of me and bustled around the university interviewing my colleagues. And the embarrassment of the officers who "found" me in Chicago, New Orleans, and St. Louis furnished me with a perverse amusement.

However, the irony soon doubled back on me. It was something of a shock, yes, a blow to my self-esteem, to see how quickly all the fuss died down. In four days I passed from the front page to a spot among the advertisements for trusses and rheumatism remedies. In another three days I slipped from the news altogether, except for an occasional brief notice that police had begun to suspect foul play and were about to ask the FBI for assistance. Sometimes, with an understandable reluctance to vanish completely from the scene, I tried to chat about the *affaire Gray* with my landlady or with the waitress at the restaurant, but it was amazing how little interest the aborigines of the West Side had in the university and the mysterious disappearance of one of its distinguished professors. I could guess that the crescendo of chatter at the cocktail parties had passed its peak. Sitting for hours at a time in my room, I found that I thought seldom about Helen, and even less about the children. Joan and Ned were well on the way to taking care of themselves. As for Helen, she would have security enough. The house was paid for, our savings were considerable, and in due time she would draw benefits from our insurance policies and the ample pension fund which I had accumulated. I knew, moreover, that the university always found some clerical or secretarial job for its widows and abandoned wives. No, if anything, my desertion might prove a good thing for her. Occasionally I considered my own destiny, what I would do with myself and how I would go about making a living. But most often, I thought despairingly of my lost identity. Where and when would I recover myself? How many other formal precisians of non-existence had engaged in the same frantic search in that very room? While a phantom troop of forlorn figures

paced the threadbare flowered carpet, sat brooding in the horsehair chairs, or lay despondently upon the tarnished brass bed, Descartes' first postulate, slightly altered, twanged in my head: *Credo ergo sum. If* I could believe, I would be.

During recent years I had often wondered how an underground was able to flourish in the very teeth of enemy occupation. Now I could see that it might be managed. Even with the police, so to speak, hot on my trail, establishing myself as an approved member of society took but a few minutes. I applied for a job in one of the limestone quarries south of town, saying that I had come from a farm in the hills of Tennessee near Murfreesboro. Without much ado, I was given a social security card and number, as well as a membership card in the stone workers' union. By signing my name half-a-dozen times, I became George Edward Brown. What surprised me was the ease with which I adapted myself. From the first I got along well with the men, who were soon calling me Tennessee. Somewhere Emerson says that the truck driver and the college professor give themselves away by their speech. The Sage of Concord was mistaken. The secret is not to try to speak unlike yourself. The men I worked with accepted me at face value, and whatever formality there was in my speech or manner they attributed to my supposed Southern origin. The work itself was hard in the beginning. But I liked it, and relished the sense of physical exhaustion each night. I slept soundly, and without benefit of pills. Although the pay was low (I *was* inexperienced labor and at what is called an advanced age), it was sufficient for my simple needs. All in all, the life was good. And I well remember the thrill I felt one morning when, clinging shakily to the iron cables, I took my first ride on a huge block of limestone swung high in the air by the derrick. All around me the sheer limestone walls dazzled my eyes with a brilliant display of color. I had not known that there could be so many tints of brown and yellow and orange and purple in such a variety of stippling and shading. Far below was the engine, crowned with a coiling plume of smoke. And (as though to provide the fitting touch for the Passionate Shepherd), on a nearby hillside, in the cold pastoral landscape surrounding the quarry, huddled a flock of sheep.

January and February brought snow, frost, and ice. My hands and face put forth a leathery weatherbeaten skin, and I became quite tough

physically. My days were little else than work and sleep. Sometimes after the whistle blew at four o'clock, I accompanied some of the men to a cafe in the vicinity of the quarries for a glass of beer and a game of checkers or dominoes. Since I was tired at the end of the day and went to bed early, the evening passed quickly and I had little time for speculation. Aside from the *Post* and the local paper, I read almost nothing. Now and then I managed to get hold of the campus newspaper, and through it I kept an eye on my family and my deserted track at the university. Frequently I had heard people say that they would like to visit the earth after their death to see whether they were missed and how they were spoken of. That was the position I was in, a ghost haunting the scenes of his former life. And I can testify that I needed all the comfort I could suck from ironic detachment. For a while, it was entertaining to see who would be put into my slot. From various items in the campus paper, I learned that young Bob Hendricks had taken over my advanced course and graduate seminar, and also my seat on three or four special committees. Except that he had already launched himself in early railroad history, I suppose that he might even have been willing to inherit my thirty caskets of note cards. I had a picture of him, gradually taking on my manner, my dress, my neutral gray coloration. Indeed, I began to feel that it would be no more than proper for him to move in with Helen and take my place in that Hollywood bed.

There was undeniably an element of hurt in seeing how soon my shoes were filled. Nevertheless, watching young Hendricks pour, like raw molten metal, into the channels and molds so long occupied by Professor Gray was to have, in the long run, a wholesome effect upon me. I no longer had a carapace to crawl back into. Young Hendricks had cut off my retreat. George Edward Brown was now absolutely on his own. This realization first struck me just a couple of weeks ago, as the calendar wheeled away from Winter. March came in with a roar of wind and a flurry of soggy snow that soaked into the frozen earth. I could almost hear the iron bonds cracking and falling apart. These presentiments of Spring persuaded me to buy a bright red plaid mackinaw and the kind of scarlet cap worn by deer hunters. And it was only last Saturday that, impelled by some unnamed yearning, instead of having a beer and a game of checkers, I donned my new outfit and loitered on the courthouse square, not the fashionable east side with its expensive shops like Ma-

demoiselle, but the west side where were the five-and-tens, the hardware stores, and the loan sharks. This plebeian side swarmed with farmers and laborers on Saturday afternoon, and I felt safely camouflaged as I lounged against a store front. The yearning which had seized me was, I admitted to myself, for someone to take cognizance of *me,* to fill my void with a sense of being. Had Helen come by then, I might even have revealed myself to her. But that futility was avoided. The thread by which fate hung held firm. It was rare for Helen to come to that side of the square. However, two of my former colleagues *did* pass by and fail to recognize me. And then suddenly my heart began to pound furiously. There, coming along my side of the street, was Rose Matthews. Her figure, I now noticed, was even more abundant, riper, than I had remembered. As she passed, without thinking I gave a low whistle. She halted.

"Pleasures prove," I said. "Pleasures prove."

She turned back uncertainly and looked at me. Then I saw that she was not Rose Matthews at all, but another woman I had never seen before. Without glasses, my eyes had played me a trick. The woman was not even a brunette, but a decided blonde.

"What was that you said?" she demanded.

There was a roughness to her voice which I found exciting. For a full minute we looked at each other, hardly conscious of the crowds passing by. Unlike Rose Matthews at the cocktail party, this woman really knew I was there. Not *credo ergo sum,* I suddenly understood, but *credis ergo sum. You* believe, therefore I am. In that moment the distressing conviction of non-existence dropped away from me like a sloughed skin. I felt alive, as you do on shipboard with a new companion to whom nothing about you is old shoe. I studied the woman's face before replying. It was round and lush, with the blood about to flood into the fair skin. Her nose was a saucy pug, and her full chin was pertly dimpled. A little hat perched on her honey-colored hair, and her blue eyes were examining me with a mixture of interest and puzzlement. No doubt, the bright red mackinaw and the cap were doing their work. I gave her body a bold up-and-down glance. "I said, Treasure trove, treasure trove."

She hesitated for an instant, and then smiled. "Now, Daddy," she said with mock reproach. "Behave yourself, Daddy." She gave my arm a pat and walked on, flipping her tail provocatively. I was sure that I would see her again.

The Zeitgeist and the Supreme Court

By HENRY W. EHRMANN

TWO SCORE YEARS AGO Justice Felix Frankfurter, then Law Officer of the Bureau of Insular Affairs, commented in a spirited dinner address on the relationship between *The Zeitgeist and the Judiciary*. Whether judges represented or resisted the current moods of the world around them, Mr. Frankfurter felt that the courts are necessarily brought in direct contact with the public needs, and that thereby their work acquires intimate public significance. "Hence," he concluded, "the importance of recognizing the true character of the questions that come before them."

In the uneasy spring of 1951, at the very height of the public debate about the nature of the world-wide struggle in which this country is engaged, the justices of the Supreme Court must have felt in their chambers the breath of the Zeitgeist upon them. Their decision to uphold the conviction of the leaders of the Communist Party is most likely to be only one in a long line of findings trying to weigh the security of the nation against traditional civil liberties in an unprecedented emergency. At an undetermined distance from peace (in which individual freedom can flower) and from general and total war (in which survival and victory may exact the sacrifice of cherished values) the Supreme Court sought to apply standards that in the history of the republic had been developed under conditions of either peace or war.

The ultimate issue before the court was to decide whether Congress had exceeded its constitutional power when it adopted the Smith Act which, according to the findings of the lower courts, the defendants had

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violated. That statute had been drafted during the period of the Hitler-Stalin pact when democratic institutions everywhere felt threatened by the possibility of a combined assault from nazi and communist totalitarianism. In a mixed mood of hysteria, xenophobia, isolationism, and hypocrisy, Congress had stowed away the main criminal provisions in an Alien Registration Act. It had altogether refrained from naming the organizations in which membership was reprehensible.

The question was, did now the provisions of the Act of 1940, as applied to the communist leaders, infringe upon the protection granted by the Bill of Rights, and especially upon freedom of speech?

It is most likely that the framers of the First Amendment never had a very precise idea of what they meant by freedom of speech, nor could they foresee the infinite variety of situations in which it would be necessary to draw a line between desirable freedom and licentiousness of speech. In their long uphill fight against uncertainties and irrational fears, Justices Holmes and Brandeis, eventually backed by the court majority, put a practical meaning into the constitutional guarantee. Freedom of speech, then, was found to have its limits whenever the words used were creating "a clear and present danger that they will bring about the substantive evils that Congress has a right to prevent."

The sentencing of Eugene Dennis and his fellow party leaders centers in the application of the clear and present danger test to their activities. At least the majority opinion as announced by Chief Justice Vinson and joined in by three of his colleagues, and the minority opinions of Justices Black and Douglas leave no doubt that for them the decision depends on whether the American Communist Party today threatens public security to such an extent as to justify the denial of certain constitutional principles to its leaders. The majority answers with a categorical yea, the dissenting judges with an equally emphatic nay.

The decision highlights almost dramatically the difficulties of applying the test of clear and present danger to a complicated situation. Over the years, and especially in the writings of American liberals, the test had been made from a working device into a slogan and shibboleth. It had become something of a shorthand statement expected to yield its own meaning without further analytical or creative effort. Forgetful of their master's warning that "to rest upon a formula is a slumber that prolonged means death," many of Holmes' disciples had gained from the constant

affirmation of the test by the courts a false sense of security. All seemed to be well with civil liberties, as long as the high bench was willing to accept a hyphenated prescription. Actually, with the hindsight gained from the decisions in the present case, one might conclude that for a long time careful ambiguities and silences had hardly hidden the fact that the justices were far from thinking alike about the meaning of clear-and-present-danger.

II

Ever since the Russian revolution, the Supreme Court had avoided passing explicit judgment on the nature of world communism. As long as the Soviet Union was weak and as long as there was no federal law on the statute books directly applicable to communist activities, the court was able to dispose of an occasional case involving a communist appellant by swinging the yardstick of the Holmes-Brandeis test.

Hence, earlier pronouncements by the court, some of them little short of naïve, some of them begging the issue, all of them made under different political and legal circumstances, were of little help. In the present case, the justices voting with the majority were clearly impressed by the new and unprecedented kind of party they now recognize the Communist Party to be, impressed also by the new and unprecedented condition of world affairs from which the communists draw a novel kind of strength.

Old standards for differentiating political from conspiratorial activities are clearly out of date when judging a modern totalitarianism. For like all totalitarian movements, the communist parties are (in the words of the French philosopher A. Koyré) "secret societies established in broad daylight." The loose and wordy individualism of anarchists and syndicalists with whom the courts had to deal during and after the First World War also differs, in everything but in the hostility against "bourgeois democracy," from the blind discipline and dogmatism that characterize the devotees of the communist cause. Not since the days of the Islam has a secular religion commanded a similarly active and unquestioning loyalty.

The operational code of communist parties invites yet a further difficulty. The Smith Act like many of its forerunners—among others, the New York Anarchy and various Criminal Syndicalism Statutes, the

Espionage Act of 1917 and 1918—punishes persons who advocate or otherwise encourage the overthrow of the United States Government by force or violence. The most celebrated decisions of the past which the present judges wish to uphold have always attempted to distinguish between preaching of violence, which should be permitted as an expression of an opinion, and incitement which might be barred when leading to dangerous action. Since beliefs will often be the springs of action, the distinction will never be easy. It completely breaks down when applied to the activities of the communist leaders.

One will, of course, agree with the court that these activities are something else than "a seminar in political theory." But the communists everywhere, while members of an iron organization, are also apostles of a doctrine as elastic as rubber. There is no reason to believe that the most incredible somersaults which have characterized communist strategy and tactics in the past will not be repeated. But then it might not always be possible to lay the advocacy of force and violence at the doorsteps even of the leaders of the movement. Indeed, in her brilliant analysis of totalitarianism, Hannah Arendt has pointed out that to be completely free from the content of their own ideologies is the privilege of the highest rank of the totalitarian hierarchy. For the communists, a success gained means the justification of the method applied. Hence, a criminal statute that sets out to describe reprehensible methods is doomed, unless the judges are willing to ignore the fluctuations of communist terminology and to punish bad intentions rather than overt acts. But once bad tendency becomes the test of criminality, the invasion of the civil rights of all, communists and anti-communists alike, rises as an immediate threat.

III

While precedents are difficult of application in such a new situation as the one facing us now, there are nevertheless guideposts on the way to facilitate the finding of a compromise between our libertarian faith and the need for self-preservation. More than anybody else, Louis Brandeis has tried to determine which are the concrete conditions under which the danger to the republic becomes so overwhelming as to justify restrictions on the freedom of speech. "If there be time," he stated in a concurring opinion, "to expose through discussion the falsehood and fallacies, to avert the evil by the processes of education, the remedy to be applied

is more speech, not enforced silence. Only an emergency can justify suppression."

When such criteria are used to appraise the activities of the American Communist Party today and in 1948 when the indictment was brought, can it truly be maintained that communist agitation has destroyed the climate of reason and discussion? Neither before nor since the outbreak of the Korean war have communist falsifications of the historical record ever succeeded in obliterating the necessary preconditions for free discussion.

To believe that "more speech" will enlighten the hard core of the communist hierarchy and membership would be to misunderstand the character of the international communist movement as a religious sect not amenable to reason. But the extent of the emergency justifying suppression can only be measured by assessing to what degree the foreign growth has actually destroyed the healthy tissue of American society.

What is called in the Stalinist vocabulary the "bolshevization" of a communist organization has been achieved by the Communist Party of the United States in every respect, except one. Its leadership is composed of "professionals" prepared to follow unquestioningly every order emanating from Moscow. Its line and organization are completely pliable, apt to function with any desired speed in the limelight of the overt political scene just as well as under conditions of illegality. But where the party has fallen pitifully short from fulfilling its bolshevist mission is in establishing contact with the working class and the popular masses of this country.

All this is obviously well known to the members of the Supreme Court. As late as 1937, a majority of the court freed a communist Negro organizer who had entered Georgia with a clearly inflammatory pamphlet calling everywhere in the "Black Belt" for the confiscation of the lands belonging to the whites and for a revolutionary struggle against the "white bourgeoisie." Yet, at that time, the justices, knowing about the limitations of the American Communist Party, did not consider that there was created by the defendant's activities a threat to the safety of the state justifying a limitation upon constitutional privileges. From the experiences of the last fifteen years it might indeed be considered as one of the most convincing proofs of communist impotence that its hold on minority groups has constantly declined. "In America," Justice Doug-

las remarks forcefully, "they are miserable merchants of unwanted ideas; their wares remain unsold. The fact that their ideas are abhorrent does not make them powerful."

Today the court, when evaluating the dangers inherent in American communism, is concerned almost exclusively with the actual or potential support that communists everywhere in the world can draw from the Soviet Union, both fatherland and fortified position of the international movement. Where earlier groups devoted to the cause of proletarian revolt had paid lip-service to a lofty and shapeless internationalism, the courts are faced here with what Léon Blum has called a "foreign nationalist party" exacting allegiance to a highly organized and presently hostile power. Hence, the opinions finding against Dennis deal at considerable length with what Chief Justice Vinson describes rather vaguely as the "touch-and-go-nature" of American-Soviet relations and with the general state of world affairs.

The decision discusses at some length examples of successful communist conspiracies from countries all over the world, now drawn into the Soviet orbit. There, it is said, communist parties have installed themselves in power whenever the situation was "ripe." To find out in time, when the situation would be similarly ripe in this country, Justice Jackson adds, it would be necessary to "appraise imponderables, including international and national phenomena which baffle the best informed foreign offices and our most experienced politicians."

Such resignation leads the court into stretching the words "clear and present danger" until they include the activities of these defendants. In a curious metaphor which denotes on the part of the majority the hope to derive certainty for the solution of unsettled social and political problems from the soothing normalcy of the natural cosmos, the Chief Justice concludes: "If the ingredients of the reaction are present we cannot bind the Government to wait until the catalyst is added."

But this describes the danger instead of clear and present as possible and future, and the limitations imposed upon the freedoms promised in the First Amendment would need a frank redefinition (which, incidentally, Judge Learned Hand, finding for the Court of Appeals, attempts with far greater candidness than the Supreme Court).

What the decision neglects to analyze is the nature of the communist threat to this country. That threat comes from the aggressive power of

the Soviet Union, and not from its stooges in the United States. While the communist virus is imported from abroad, all of the countries mentioned by the Supreme Court are points in case that the virus incubates only in a favorable environment generated usually by weak or anemic democratic traditions or by the impatient nationalism of former subject peoples. Where such favorable environment is lacking, as in the United States, the threat does not come from communist advocacy of revolution, of force or violence.

The peril we might have to protect ourselves from here is that of treason and espionage. That such dangers could become acute with the possible approach of a war with the Soviet Union, hardly anybody would deny. But such are not the crimes for which these defendants were indicted. And if indictments are to be drawn up for treason and espionage, there is no need for a Smith Act which by its broad wording threatens to engulf the guarantees of the Bill of Rights.

IV

Neither Justice Frankfurter nor Justice Jackson in their concurring opinions agree with the reasoning of their colleagues whom, however, they join in upholding the conviction. Nor are they in unison between themselves.

In an article, written during the depression, in the winter of the worst economic and social distress which the people of the United States have ever endured, Mr. Frankfurter had sided emphatically with Brandeis' defense of free and violent criticism. Now, in less passionate but still unmistakable terms, Justice Frankfurter doubts the wisdom of the statute under which Dennis and Company were indicted. He quotes approvingly from recent writers who have warned against combating the communists in our midst by restricting civil liberties. Yet he does not follow Justices Black and Douglas in their vigorous denunciation of the conviction as unconstitutional.

Some commentators on the decision have already accused Justice Frankfurter of having once more betrayed the liberal trust. They overlook the fact that Mr. Frankfurter has been remarkably consistent in the attitude that leads him here to uphold the conviction. First in 1925 in an unsigned editorial in the *New Republic*, then in the Flag-Salute cases of the '40's, and now in this decision, he has reiterated his opinion that

it is not the Supreme Court's role to invalidate illiberal legislation. As if to give to his beliefs the value of an article of faith, Mr. Frankfurter has repeated his warnings against the preoccupation with constitutionality rather than with wisdom of legislation in almost identical terms for over a quarter of a century. Only a close scrutiny of the words he has chosen each time reveals a deepening resignation and increasing doubts whether public opinion and the elected representatives of the American people will rise to the defense of the spirit of the Constitution.

The judicial deference to legislative judgment might well appear one day as the dominant note of Justice Frankfurter's constitutional decisions. Their search for "objectivity" endeavors to let the Zeitgeist flow unhampered, and could, by throwing the responsibility for safeguarding civil liberties back into the political arena, sound the reveille for liberal action. What has been said by Dean Powell after the Flag-Salute case still holds true to a large extent. Those who would have the court condemn everything that they detest must recognize that they invoke a standard of judicial conduct that they have condemned earlier when the court practiced it against what they considered desirable economic and social regulation.

Yet the decision which Justice Frankfurter has reached in the Dennis case illustrates well some of the dangers inherent in such self-restraint of the judiciary.

First of all, the certiorari which the Supreme Court had granted was limited to the very question of the constitutionality of the provisions under which the petitioners had been convicted. If, then, the court, or at least one of the justices, is of the opinion that it is not really within the court's domain to scrutinize a congressional statute, there remains little room for the tribunal of exercising its function of adjusting the relationship of the individual to the government.

While Justice Frankfurter has been personally consistent in his refusal to consider the "nine old men" as the architects of national policy, it is none the less common belief that the nature of American government depends upon the opinions and the principles of the men who constitute the Supreme Court. Mr. Frankfurter himself has repeatedly quoted de Tocqueville's famous saying that in this country sooner or later almost any political question resolves itself into a judicial question. Time and again in his free speech decisions, Holmes engaged in expounding "the

theory of our Constitution." But do not then "wisdom" and "constitutionality" become undistinguishable at least at certain points?

The legislative history of the Smith Act itself clearly indicates that judicial review of their handiwork is all but expected by the members of Congress. During the hearings on the bill, its sponsors admitted that the provisions might be too sweepingly construed. They stated that Congress should nevertheless enact them and leave it to the courts to lop off whatever was excessive in them. If then afterwards, the Supreme Court considers its powers too precarious to attack the constitutionality of a statute, judicial review falls singularly short of inducing the legislators to constant vigilance for the rights of the individual.

Justice Frankfurter himself would not engage in his careful examination of the "reasonableness" of the convictions, if he were not convinced that somewhere the line would have to be drawn, lest the Bill of Rights becomes a mere catalogue of pious admonitions, like those contained in some European constitutions. One might applaud the contention that the Supreme Court should use its "veto power" sparingly and accord the strongest presumption to the validity of legislation. But there has been established, however gropingly, in the court's decisions a hierarchy of values. Whenever a statute pertains, as does the Smith Act, to such basic civil liberties as the freedom of expression and of thought, the court has viewed legislative encroachments with far less deference than when concerned with economic legislation.

If one wishes to reproach Justice Frankfurter for inconsistencies, it is rather on this point than on any other. He has occasionally inveighed against the "preferred position of free speech," which, as he admits, has crept into the opinions of the Supreme Court. But in some of his own opinions, he has declared that he would not hesitate to strike down any invasion of basic liberties such as a free press and the freedom of expression for school children and their parents. He once defended both Cardozo and Holmes against the reproach of measuring different legislative acts with different standards. "Naturally," he argued, the justices "attributed very different legal significance to those liberties of the individual which history has attested as the indispensable conditions of a free society from that . . . attached to liberties which derived merely from shifting economic arrangements."

It is quite obvious that here the concern for constitutional symmetry

and for unflagging objectivity breaks down. Justice Frankfurter's concurring opinion in the Dennis case does not conceal the fact that every constitutional question involves a weighing of competing values. Hence, the criminal provisions of the Smith Act deserved censure not only for their lack of wisdom but for their lack of respect for constitutional guarantees.

V

The point might be made that in the more than 160 years of its history the Supreme Court has never yet invalidated a statute infringing upon the freedom of speech, and that the court could not be expected to innovate in the midst of a grave national emergency. Even in their famous dissenting opinions, Justices Holmes and Brandeis did not flatly come out for the unconstitutionality of the 1918 Amendment to the Espionage Act.

Yet what the court has done frequently, and with considerable gain for the cause of civil liberties, is to declare provisions unconstitutional without saying so, by merely giving to the statute a narrower and proper construction. In this way the court has often been able to avoid grave constitutional issues. By construing a statute in accordance with the presumption that the legislators would not have intended an unconstitutional interpretation, the courts can preserve their power of review in particular cases.

Any sedition law is likely to be applied in ways which were wholly unexpected when it was enacted. In the case of the Smith Act there was at the time of its enactment considerable uncertainty about the circumstances under which indictments might be drawn. If the majority of the Supreme Court had evaluated realistically the nature of the communist danger, they could have quashed these convictions without necessarily invalidating the entire statute.

In his searching examination of the present-day relationship between national security and individual freedom, Professor Lasswell, writing while the Dennis case was moving up to the Supreme Court, forecast that a conviction for violation of the Smith Act would not be sustained if it were based on the principle of guilt merely by association. Yet the majority is finding against the defendants as the known "leaders of the Communist Party" without giving any guidance to the lower courts as

to what kind of affiliation with the party might be subject to punishment in the future.

Justice Jackson in his concurring opinion avoids the determination of guilt of the various defendants by describing the political conspiracy in which undoubtedly every faithful communist engages as a criminal conspiracy to overthrow the government. Among the members of the present Supreme Court, Justice Jackson is easily the most profound student of modern totalitarian movements. His report to the President on the major Nazi war criminals and his indictment of the Nuremberg defendants will one day be considered as classical documents of international criminal law. His concurring opinion in the Supreme Court case finding on the Taft-Hartley Act describes in equally masterful fashion the nature of communist activities in the United States, incidentally, without applying to them the "clear and present danger" test.

Desirous of bringing to justice the greatest number of Nazis who might have played any role in Hitler's "conspiracy," the Nuremberg indictment tried to make the mere fact of membership in certain categories of organizations the test of criminality. In a significant passage, the judgment of the International Tribunal refused to go along with the indictment on this point: "The conspiracy must be clearly outlined in its criminal purpose . . . in accordance with well-settled legal principles . . . criminal guilt is personal, and mass punishments must be avoided." It is now known that this statement was authored by the American member of the International Tribunal, Francis Biddle, who in order to insert it had to overcome considerable opposition from his Russian colleague.

In the present case the tenets of Justice Jackson's opinion, reintroducing the rejected principles of the Nuremberg indictment and applying them to another totalitarian movement, are opposed not only by the dissenting opinions but also by Mr. Frankfurter. This adds to the confusion, but does not clarify the scope of criminal prosecutions under the Smith Act.

It is probably in the relationship of the Supreme Court decision to past and future action by the lower courts that one will discover the greatest difference from former battles for civil liberties. When Mr. Frankfurter and others have warned that such battles are never won in the courts, they had in mind experiences showing how powerless judges had

been to check the hysteria generated by war and revolution. Then a large amount of suppression had always taken place before a sedition statute was tested, even in the lowest court. The Supreme Court Justices could only "lock the doors after the Liberty Bell was stolen" and the emergency was over. The constitutionality of the Alien and Sedition Acts of 1798 under which thousands of persons were imprisoned was never passed upon by the Supreme Court before the legislation was repealed.

But in regard to the Smith Act, the situation so far has been reversed. There have been until now hardly any convictions under a statute ten years old. In part this was due to the fact that the present Supreme Court was generally assumed to have been won over to the principles of the Holmes-Brandeis dissents. In a number of decisions against both communists and fascist rabble-rousers, the court had shown itself extremely wary of infringements on the freedom of speech and assembly.

Among the American people there has been so far remarkably little hysteria in spite of a cold war raging for years and of an armed truce breaking into bloodshed. In most parts of the country the outcome of the case involving the top American communists, free on bail, has been watched in a mood of detached, if not indifferent patience. Only now, after the Supreme Court has spoken, widespread prosecutions are bound to start, striking first against the lower echelons of the communist hierarchy, and probably soon against the membership. The national emergency, far from approaching its end, is expected by many to extend over decades.

Under such circumstances, while civil liberties still might not be won in the Supreme Court, they could well be lost there.

VI

One of the opinions makes the point that the treatment of its minorities is among the most searching tests of the level of civilization attained by a society. As "minority leaders," Eugene Dennis and his co-defendants deserve none of the honors Jefferson has bestowed upon genuine revolutionaries. The communist chieftains are cynical members of a corrupt international bureaucracy—in the words of Harold Laski, "alike contemptuous of reason and careless of truth." The very same men now in prison applauded when in 1942 the Smith Act was used to convict some eccentric Trotskyites. None of the defendants is interested in the rules of

democracy for purposes other than first corrupting and then destroying them.

It is the majority, the American community at large, that is interested in extending civil liberties even to communists. The vitality of our political and social institutions depends on an absence of irrational fears and on vigorous discussion. Whether or not it might be possible to erect a legal distinction between permissible discussion and reprehensible "advocacy" is dubious. In actual fact, a suppression of advocacy will necessarily result in silencing the critics. The struggle in which we are engaged cannot be won when democracy becomes paralyzed and static. Reaching out to destroy the enemy, a powerful garrison state, we might have installed him permanently in our midst and the Orwellian fantasy might still become reality. At a recent Congress of the French Radical Party, the peril was dramatically described when a speaker declared that in his unhappy country there were only two parties left: the communists and the immense party of fear.

Those who know the moral climate of our government bureaus and the mood prevailing on many a university campus have reasons for alarm but not for dejection. That there lurk dangers in any choice cannot be denied, and has been brought out by all of the opinions in the Dennis case. Denying to the communists the "keys to the arsenal," as another recent Supreme Court decision put it, is essential. But from there we have to go on with a positive purpose and a clear understanding for the "true character" of the problems besetting us as well as for the way to meet them.

The Supreme Court, it has been said, must be one of our most effective teachers, and must like Socrates interpret to us our own intentions. A decision like the present one, speaking with disconcertingly many voices, presenting five opinions which criss-cross each other on most of the important legal and political issues, will be of little help—unless we are brave enough to understand the judgment of the court, Smith Act and all as just another phase of experimentation, that most sacred right of a democracy.

Soviet Policy on Nationalities

By JULIAN TOWSTER

At this stage in world affairs the Soviet Union's solution of its nationality problem is not a mere question of Soviet internal life. It is of immense significance for the rest of the world. For it bears distinctly on both the foreign and domestic policies of the Soviet Union, and it must of necessity figure prominently in any estimates of Soviet capabilities and intentions.

Unfortunately, our understanding of this problem is clouded by a welter of contradictory and mutually exclusive interpretations. Let us look at a few illustrations. In a book published at the end of 1946, a prominent sociologist, with a number of volumes on Russia to his credit, wrote that the Comintern was dead and that it could *not* be revived; that nationalism was stronger than ever in the U.S.S.R., but that this nationalism was *not* "imperialism, i.e. [it was not] the tendency to conquer peoples which do not belong to the historically delimited territory of the nation." He concluded that "in turning nationalist once more, Russia proved that in the very depths of her national soul she never had abandoned her historical way, which on the surface seemed lost in 1917." Whatever the precise meaning attached by that author to the "historical way" and "national soul" of a Russia only one-half of whose population consists of Russians, in less than a year after his statement was published Soviet leaders made a hollow mockery of his prediction. They set up the Cominform and foisted Communist political control on the peoples in Eastern Europe, which by no stretch of imagination can be considered to belong to "the historically delimited territory" of the Russian nation.

A little earlier, another well-known interpreter of the Soviet scene, a prolific writer on the U.S.S.R., posed the question of her withdrawal

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to the old frontiers. "Today," said he, "it is still possible for the Soviet Union to retreat in Europe to the limits of national Russia—to the natural borders of the three main Russian nationalities—and to re-establish the real independence of her neighbors. Tomorrow may be too late." In the same volume he expressed the opinion that while Britain and other colonial powers would resist, Soviet Russia might support a scheme for control of colonial countries by an international organization in which the United States would assume the leading role. Perhaps the most charitable thing one can say about such analyses, about this positing of the possibility of a Soviet return to the "natural borders" and "limits of national Russia" (as well as about the idea that the U.S.S.R. would assist America to a trusteeship over colonial areas) is that they were naive and pious hopes.

The same author, in a book published recently, maintains that Soviet expectations that Communist parties and individuals abroad will sacrifice certain interests of their own nations to those of the U.S.S.R., constitute a new (a postwar) concept of internationalism. The fact is that there is nothing new in this conception. From the mid-'20's on, Communists all over the world have been told that the Soviet Union—as "the Socialist Fatherland" and as the base for a world-wide victory of Communism in the future—has the first and highest claim upon their loyalty and devotion. Likewise, the same author's insistence on the impossibility of a solution of the nationality problem in the U.S.S.R. through the assimilation of minorities, through a melting-pot amalgamation of racial groups, is contradicted in part at least by the vast process of intersplicing and intermingling of the nationalities, with the consequence, as he himself puts it, "that the population of the Soviet Union is more mixed today than it ever was. . . . Today there is hardly an area in Russia where the population is linguistically or racially uniform." Finally, to cite another example, a very able writer on international politics recently stated that we must determine whether it is the concept of world revolution or nationalism that motivates Soviet Russia: if it is the first we should wipe her out; if the second we should employ diplomacy to resolve our differences. The trouble with this analysis is that it fails to consider the possibility of any dual motivation of Soviet policy, and misses the boat entirely on the question as to which serves which in Soviet politics.

I have taken time to point out certain one-sided interpretations be-

cause they can and do have an important influence upon the practical policies of our own government in today's world struggle.

A more balanced understanding of the Soviet nationality problem, so it seems to me, can be gained by examining it from four angles: (1) how was it regarded by the Soviet leaders at the inception of the regime; (2) what was the pattern of solution designed for it, and the strategy behind it; (3) what modifications in this pattern were brought about in recent years; and (4) how does it fit into the total picture of current Soviet political strategy?

The problem visualized by the Bolshevik leaders after the seizure of power was: how to build a centralized, essentially unitary state out of diverse, hostile, and separatistically inclined national minorities. Two factors made its solution extremely difficult. The first of these was the legacy of bitterness among the nationalities which made them want to set up shop for themselves—a desire which was deliberately encouraged by the Bolsheviks before the Revolution. In Tsarist Russia, national differences had been exacerbated by practices which earned for the country the name of "the prison of nations." The dominant slogans of Tsarism—"One Tsar, One Religion, One Language," "Russia One and Indivisible"—spelled political oppression, economic exploitation, and forcible Russification for the ethnic minorities. *Divide et impera,* setting the nationalities against one another, was a standard political strategem of the Tsarist regime. And the peripheral peoples of the Empire—in the East in particular—were kept in extreme backwardness. These practices left a heritage of enmity and bitterness among the nationalities, and under the circumstances, Lenin thought, the Bolshevik slogan of self-determination to the point of secession would make good politics. "We, on our part, do not want separation at all," he confessed in 1917. "We want as large a state as possible, as close a union as possible." But to bring about such amalgamation voluntarily, he argued, recognition of freedom of secession was necessary. Six months before the seizure of power, Lenin expressed this credo in the following words: "The more decisively our republic will recognize freedom of secession for the non-Great-Russian nations, the stronger will other nations be *attracted* towards union with us, the less friction will there be, the rarer will be the cases of actual secession, the shorter will be the period during which some of the nations will stay separated." In short, while he warned that the interests of socialism take

precedence over the right of nations to self-determination, he held high hopes that the Finns, Poles, Ukrainians and other peoples would not want to secede from a socialist Russia.

The second complicating factor was the extremely variegated nature of the population. There are more than 175 different racial and ethnic groups in the U.S.S.R., speaking some 125 different languages. Most of these are small groups. Only ten nationalities, according to the 1939 census, constituted each more than one per cent of the population. The three main Slav groups, numbering 132,000,000 people, constituted together 78 per cent or more than three-quarters of the total population: the Russians 58.5 per cent; the Ukrainians 16.5 per cent; the Byelorussians or "White Russians" 3 per cent. The remaining seven national groups, each of which comprised over one per cent of the populace were: the Uzbeks, Tatars, Kazakhs, Jews, Azerbaijanians, Georgians and Armenians. All the other national minority groups together constituted less than 10 per cent of the population.

The centrifugal pull unleashed among these nationalities by the Revolution proved that Lenin's optimistic expectations concerning their desire to come together under a Socialist regime were wrong. One after another the border peoples began to fall away and proclaim their independence. The Bolsheviks quickly reversed their earlier opposition to federalism and devised a plan to meet this threat. Their primary purpose was to arrest the wave of separatism among the nationalities by impressing upon them the idea that they would be treated as equals and that their national interests would be represented and advanced. Essentially this entailed a triple objective: (1) to convince the rest of the populace that the Slavs would not be favored over the other nationalities; (2) to persuade the Slavs in the U.S.S.R. that the Russians had abandoned the idea of dominating and forcibly Russifying them; and (3) to assure the Russians that their national heritage was not being frittered away. These objectives the Soviet leaders sought to pursue by a comprehensive solution along political, economic and cultural lines. Briefly, the political solution was to grant to the nationalities various forms of separate political self-expression, while at the same time balancing these grants by arrangements which in practice secured the centralization of authority. It was on that basis that a territorial administrative structure was set up, comprising at present 51 distinct national units: 16 constituent republics,

called Union Republics, 16 Autonomous Republics (ASSR), 9 Autonomous Regions, and 10 National Areas. In addition the national entities are represented in the federal legislature—that is in the Supreme Soviet—and in its Presidium.

The economic solution for the nationality problem was to raise the material level of the backward peoples and areas through industrialization as well as modernization of agriculture, but to do so on the basis of a Union-wide plan and identical patterns, centrally determined and controlled.

The cultural solution consisted of linguistic autonomy on the basis of ideological uniformity. The formula for the cultural solution of the nationality problem was given by Stalin on May 18, 1925: "Proletarian in content and national in form—such is the universal human culture towards which socialism is marching. Proletarian culture does not cancel national culture, but lends it content. National culture on the other hand does not cancel proletarian culture, but lends it form." This formula was designed to provide an outlet for national self-expression by the nationalities, while they would be simultaneously absorbing common ideas and developing homogeneity in outlook.

This fundamental theoretical statement represented a change in attitude on the part of the Bolshevik leaders. Back in 1913, fearing that any program for national cultural autonomy would separate the workers of different nationalities, and favoring what he called an "international culture of the world-wide labor movement," Lenin denounced the slogan of national culture, calling it "a clerical and bourgeois fraud—regardless of whether the Great-Russian, the Ukrainian, the Jewish, the Polish, the Georgian or any other culture is meant." In the same year Stalin opposed national cultural autonomy on the ground that "it shuts up the nations within their old shells." The effect of this negativism after the Bolsheviks had come to power was twofold: it failed to elicit any enthusiasm among the nationalities in Russia, and it encouraged Russian officials in the minority-inhabited regions to treat with indifference the cultural interests and yearnings of the national minorities. The resulting discontent brought about a reversal in theory in favor of national cultural autonomy, and with it a policy of active promotion of cultural progress among the nationalities.

The germ of this change can be found already in the period before

the Revolution, in the Bolshevik attitude on the question of a single state language. The Communist ideal was and remains a single language and a single culture for the peoples of the world, and the basic view has been that generally the assimilation of nations is a progressive development. Yet Lenin opposed a single state language as impolitic in a multi-national state, while Stalin wrote in 1913 that what particularly agitates a national minority is the fact that it does not enjoy the right to use its native tongue: "Permit it to use its native language," said he, "and the discontent will pass of itself." Since Stalin later became the chief architect of the Soviet nationality policy, he carried this concept into the change in line on national cultural autonomy, making the latter in large measure a linguistic autonomy.

In pursuit of this cultural program schools, theatres, clubs, cinemas, newspapers and periodicals, branches of the Academy of Sciences and other cultural institutions were established in the national republics throughout the U.S.S.R. The native languages were given complete equality and were made mandatory in the organs of administration, courts and educational institutions in the national units. Some sixty-seven written alphabets were created for such peoples as the Kazakh, Kirghiz and Nenets who had no alphabets before. The result of these measures was a tremendous growth in education and a cultural renaissance among various nationalities, particularly among the backward peoples of the Eastern regions.

The Soviet leaders were satisfied that the fruit of this cultural activity in the native languages was political loyalty on the part of the nationalities for the Soviet regime. Consequently they rebuked as "Great-Russian chauvinism" all talk of the superiority of the Russian culture or language and all suggestions that it was time to eliminate the national entities and to amalgamate their separate cultures and languages. The dialectic thesis on the subject, propounded officially in 1930, was that while the fusion of cultures and languages continues to be the ultimate goal, "the national cultures must be permitted to develop and expand and to reveal all their potential qualities, in order to create the conditions necessary for their fusion into a single, common culture with a single, common language."

Back of this thesis was the conviction that from the standpoint of fundamental aims the continued use of a multiplicity of native languages

really mattered little, since in their own tongues and their own institutions the nationalities were learning the same principles and made to pursue the same social, economic and political practices. Substantive uniformity would inevitably come about in the end. At the same time, the utility of the Russian laguage as an assimilating medium was not overlooked. Russian remained an official language for those who wished to use it. It was taught in the schools of the national localities, and knowledge of it was generally encouraged. Thus, partly in order to stimulate its study (though officially for the purpose of accelerating the spread of literacy), the alphabets composed for some of the nationalities were changed from the Latin to the Russian script in 1938-40.

The program for cultural uniformity was given a new impetus by the emergence of the concept of "Soviet patriotism" in the mid-'30's. In the first place the idea of a "Soviet" patriotism, having priority over the particular national attachments of the nationalities, made it possible to emphasize the culturally levelling and assimilating aspects of Soviet life. In the second place, since it was accompanied by official admission that the Russians constitute the leading nationality among the Soviet peoples, the newer concept appeared to legitimize open praise and promotion of the Russian language.

These tendencies have been particularly pronounced since the end of the recent war. There is ample evidence that the Russian language is looked upon as a potent integrating instrument for the future, and in the context of the world-wide ideological struggle recent Soviet statements have taken on increasingly chauvinistic overtones. The latest restatement of Soviet theory is given in the following terms: a single world language is the ultimate Soviet ideal; such a universal language will not emerge all at once, but will be established in several stages; and even when a "world dictatorship of the proletariat" is created, national languages will not wither away. Only during the second stage of that dictatorship, when "the single, socialist world-state" is formed, will a beginning be made in the formation of a common international language, though not yet of a single world language. There will probably be several common international languages, corresponding to the several zonal economic centers which will be set up for separate economic groupings of nations at that stage. Russian will be one of the zonal international languages and its world-wide influence will grow steadily with the ap-

pearance of new socialist nations. When the zonal economic centers are united into "a single world center of socialist economy" and socialism becomes rooted in the life of peoples, so this latest theoretical version continues, a common language for all nations will take shape—one of the international languages will be gradually transformed into "the sole world language."

Significantly, this general formulation is currently accompanied by a distinct effort to expand the assimilating function of the Russian language. What the Soviet leaders want the nationalities to believe is evident from the following recent statement: "The Russian language is great, right and mighty. It is the instrument of the most advanced culture in the world. From its inexhaustible treasures, the national languages of the U.S.S.R. draw a life-giving elixir; it is studied with love by all peoples of the great Soviet Union, who consider it as a powerful tool for their cultural progress and socialist transformation."

In the light of this conception, earlier attempts by literati of the nationalities to borrow or to adapt words from related languages across the Soviet frontiers are denounced as "a policy of betrayal of national interests—a policy of cosmopolitanism," while efforts to invent or to emphasize local variants of words are equally condemned as artificial attempts "to obstruct the penetration of Russian forms and words." This attitude on the question of language is paralleled by claims of priority for Russian scientists in regard to numerous inventions, and a general positive emphasis on the cultural achievements of the Russian past.

In sum, the basic idea stressed at present is that while the development of the other national languages is entirely legitimate, the Russian language can and does serve as a source of enrichment for them, that it already plays a progressive international role for the Soviet nationalities, and that "the future belongs to the Russian language as the language of socialism." Lastly, it should be pointed out that the entire present theory of language and culture—to which great political importance is attached—is merged in the all-pervading concept of "Soviet patriotism," which is defined as "devotion to the Soviet fatherland" and a sense of national pride, based, as Soviet propaganda puts it, on realization by all the Soviet peoples of the "great superiority" of the Soviet social order.

These conceptions entail a balance of loyalties which has at various times made the path of the nationalities a difficult one in Soviet politics.

Yet of all the aspects of the design for the solution of the nationality problem in the U.S.S.R., the cultural program has, on the whole, had the most substance.

It will be seen that much of this solution is permeated with considerations of political strategy. From the standpoint of governmental efficiency, the network of republics, regions and areas is a luxury and an administrative monstrosity. Yet it is kept up because it is deemed to satisfy a still existing urge among the nationalities for separate political organization under their national label. The federal constitution recognizes for the Union Republics a right of secession. When this right was first proclaimed in 1924, the great Russian historian Professor Miliukov, then residing in Paris, warned the French Government that the U.S.S.R. was a confederation liable to fall apart any minute because of the right to secede given by the Constitution to the Union Republics. Of course, the right of secession was and remains a myth and none of the Soviet leaders ever intended otherwise. Yet they consider it to be a politically useful myth, which they are loath to discard. Similar constitutional fictions are embraced in the doctrine that the sixteen Union Republics are sovereign states, that the Autonomous Republics are states, that even the nationalities of the Autonomous Regions and National Areas possess "national" if not state sovereignty.

If, juridically—and in terms of actual power—this is the sheerest nonsense, it makes good sense psychologically. Much of the total political pattern designed for the ethnic groups rests on the assumption that words are weapons, that concepts are symbols facilitating the harmless discharge of mass insecurities among the nationalities, that political slogans and legal labels can serve the purpose of preventive politics, of dissipating anxieties among the nationalities which might otherwise find outlets in political explosions. The premises underlying this pattern may be summed up as follows. There is a direct relationship between political semantics and the maintenance of a power structure. Public emphasis on equal rights and opportunities for the nationalities, every nationality a worthy entity, every ethnic group a "sovereignty," is conducive to ethnic peace in the body politic. It was difficult for the Armenian or Kazakh or Turkmen to feel that he belonged in old Russia. Now, however, so runs the argument, when his nationality has a government of its own, with courts, schools, a flag and other trappings of statehood, when

members of his own ethnic group are marshals or generals or members of the Central Committee or Politburo he cannot suffer from any sense of exclusion and inequality on account of nationality, and many of the anxieties and counter-aggressions so easily generated earlier on racial and nationality grounds are vaporized and dissipated.

This, in essence, is the scheme of solution of the nationality problem in the U.S.S.R. and the psycho-political considerations behind it. Its guiding precept is Lenin's dictum that "unity in the fundamental, the cardinal, the essential is not violated, but is secured by variation in particulars, in local peculiarities, in modes of approach." And the ultimate goal of this policy is the complete amalgamation of nations, or as one wit put it, "the ethnic mule" which will be unable to boast any particular pride of ancestry. Already it is claimed that the nationality policy has achieved a singular monolithism of the entire Soviet people, and a basic unity of sovereignty in the U.S.S.R. Thus, in theory and in governmental practice, a complete cycle has been made from the Tsarist premise of a "country one and indivisible" originally rejected by the Soviet leaders, back again to a concept of the Soviet state as "one and indivisible" in all fundamental aspects.

If the strategy of the nationality policy seemed clear for a long time, it became less so in the postwar period for a number of students of the U.S.S.R. who appear to have been misled by the emphasis on the Russian language and culture, and who failed to grasp the role of this policy in present Soviet calculations in the international arena. The overriding political-strategic concept of the Soviet leaders at present is that barring an early direct military involvement of the U.S.S.R.—which they seek to avoid—the world is moving to what might be termed a Samsonian stage, to recall the Biblical story of Samson bringing down the Philistine temple and destroying himself in the process, a stage where neither the Communist nor the Western camp can afford all-out war, where extinction would threaten to become co-extinction. The Soviet leaders expect to reach that stage by about 1960-65, with the completion of two or three more Five-Year Plans, the accumulation of an atomic bomb stockpile, the building up of an industrial stronghold in Eastern Europe and consolidation of the Communist victory in East Asia. At that stage the two camps will have to compete by means other than all-out war, and one of those means—as visualized by the Soviet leaders—is the so-called force of

example, the building up of what these leaders would regard as a model society and reliance on a bandwagon psychology to win new segments of humanity for the Communist cause. The Communist camp must be prepared for that stage—and the Soviet nationality policy has a distinct role to play in this process. By demonstrating the friendship and equality of the Soviet nationalities, it is to be proved that nations can live in peace and harmony under the Red banner. And by presenting the U.S.S.R. as ethnically an open society, the adherence of new peoples and nationalities is to be encouraged.

The obvious aim is cultural coordination, economic integration and political-military unification of the Communist nations concerned. Their historical past, however, suggests unequal stages of readiness for the realization of this aim and this, in the eyes of the Soviet leaders, dictates a pluralistic and differential approach for a time, with greater emphasis on assimilation of nationalities in the U.S.S.R., a slower pace in Eastern Europe, and reliance on national symbols and nationalist slogans predominantly in China and elsewhere in Asia. Through it all the leaders of world Communism talk at different levels: to the masses of the nationalities in the language of national symbolism a good deal of the time, to the Communist elites in terms of ultimate Communist ideals. They wield a conceptual pitchfork with many prongs.

In terms of priorities, let us visualize several concentric circles, with the concept of world Communism forming the outer or more inclusive circle. Within this outer circle, "Soviet patriotism" (or call it "Soviet nationalism"), embracing all the Soviet nationalities, forms another circle; which in turn encompasses a circle which might be called "Russian nationalism" and several smaller rings which represent the lesser local nationalisms. The positive attitude of the Communist regime toward the Russian culture brought political dividends during the war and this culture is being pushed as a weapon of assimilation. But this does not prove that it is the highest ideal of the Soviet leaders. Had Russian nationalism *per se* constituted a supreme value with the Soviet leaders, they might have been willing to stop at ethnographic frontiers, to compromise on "the limits of national Russia" and on the satisfaction of such legitimate, traditional national Russian interests as an outlet to an ice-free port, access to raw materials and trade, and equal participation in the comity of nations. But such is not the case. Stalin's 1927 dictum that the

"Revolution in the U.S.S.R. is only part of the world revolution, its beginning, and the base for its successful advance," still holds true today. And so does Stalin's conception that in view of its revolutionary experience the U.S.S.R. must serve as the unifying symbol and the guiding hand in the world of Communism, and, as he expresses it, "An internationalist is he who, without reservation, with no vacillation, with *no conditions,* is prepared to defend the U.S.S.R. . . . He who intends to defend the revolutionary movement in the world apart from and against the U.S.S.R. acts against the revolution. He inevitably falls into the camp of the enemies of the revolution." To us, of course, the proper characterization of the complex of concepts and political strategies which I have just described is Communist Imperialism, and only within its context can the Soviet nationality policy be correctly understood.

In conclusion, a word should be said about the relation of this problem to the current struggle for the minds of men. The Soviet leaders have sought to make political capital by claiming that their nationality policy meets one of the basic urges of our epoch—the urge for national self-determination. And they claim that it suggests a pattern for meeting another of these urges—the yearning for peace, which is becoming increasingly associated with the conviction that only ultimate world unity can secure tranquility for mankind.

Our answer to this claim lies not only in pointing out most emphatically that much in the Soviet nationality solution is subterfuge, fiction and fraud, that the Communist road to unity is paved with slavish subordination in controlled uniformity spelling the ultimate obliteration of nations. Our answer lies also in solemnly and unequivocally proclaiming our own road to unity, a road resting on human rights and democratic liberties and securing for the uniting nations true freedom of national development in the midst of growing civic cohesion. The longer we delay in steps towards a union of free peoples, the greater the opportunities of our adversary to parade its nationality design as the "wave of the future."

Some Thoughts on the Soviet Concept of Authority and Freedom

By ERNEST J. SIMMONS

THE CHASM that separates Soviet and Anglo-Saxon thinking on freedom and authority was sharply suggested toward the end of R. E. Sherwood's *Roosevelt and Hopkins.* Stalin indicated to Roosevelt at Teheran that the way to overcome the moral objections of the American people to the Soviet absorption of the Baltic states was to subject Americans to the right kind of propaganda campaign. And Vyshinsky put the matter more brutally when he said to one of the delegates that the American people should learn to obey their leaders. Herein is reflected not merely the bland assumption of the new totalitarianism, which in one form or another is as old as civilization, but also one of the central problems of the twentieth century: do the collective achievements and goals of an authoritarian power justify encroachment on the freedom of the individual? For the relationship between the individual and the state is one of the primary differentiating factors in the Soviet conception of freedom and authority and that of the West, but one nevertheless which has had a very powerful impact over the past thirty years on Western political and even legal thinking. A conviction that has dominated Western ideals and practice since 1500—the belief that the individual mind or conscience is the ultimate repository of truth, and that every individual, therefore, has the right to make his own judgments—is nowadays being questioned under the influence of the totalitarian belief that an organized group, church, party, or state, possessing some special insight into truth, has a right or duty to impose this truth upon the members of society by whatever means are most effective.

Several important Western historians of Russia have sought a basis for this totalitarian conception of freedom and authority in the beliefs

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This article, with slight changes, is an address delivered at the Twelfth Conference on Science, Philosophy and Religion. ERNEST J. SIMMONS is well known for his authoritative work on Russia and its culture. He is Professor of Russian Literature at Columbia University.

and practices in the Russia of the tsars. Though this scholarly approach can be carried too far, it has some validity. Resemblances between the old village commune and the Soviet collective farms have frequently been pointed out. But there are also continuing traditions between the old and the new in dictatorial government methods, in the suppression of personal liberties, in the oppressive activities of secret police, and in such undemocratic institutions as censorship and state controlled education. In all these respects the differences are those of degree and not of kind, for hundreds of years of secure autocratic rule had brought a greater measure of individual freedom, especially for the privileged classes, in the old Russia than presently exists for the masses of people in the Soviet Union. Yet Dostoyevsky could write in 1881: "Civil liberties may be established in Russia on an integral scale, more complete than anywhere in the world, whether in Europe or even in North America, and precisely on the same adamant foundation. It will be based not upon a written sheet of paper, but upon the children's affection of the people for the Czar, as their father, since children may be permitted many a thing which is inconceivable in the case of contractual nations; they may be entrusted with much that has nowhere been encountered, since children will not betray their father, and, being children, they will lovingly accept from him any correction of their errors."[1] Replace the word "Czar" by "Stalin" in this quotation, and it would almost stand as an official description, in spirit at least, of civil liberties in the Soviet Union. In one sense, the difference between the dictatorship of the tsars and that of Stalin is that in the latter case the state has educated the people through propaganda to some degree of acceptance of the dictatorship.

However, quite apart from civil liberties and governmental institutions, there existed in tsarist times certain indigenous intellectual and religious beliefs and practices which have helped to prepare the way for Soviet concepts of democracy, anti-individualism, the principle of unanimity, and a sense of community and world mission. The Slavophils, in particular, were the main conduits of such thinking. For example, the well known Slavophil, Alexander Khomyakov, advanced a typical progressive notion of Russian democracy in the nineteenth century as com-

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[1]F. M. Dostoyevsky, *The Diary of a Writer,* translated by Boris Brasol, Scribner's, New York, 1949, II, pp. 1033-34.

plete tolerance of the Russian common man for all peoples whatever their race, color, or creed, and he added: "We shall be, as we have always been, the democrats among European nations. We are the representatives of humanity in its purest form. . . . Russian culture puts greater trust in the voice of conscience than in the wisdom of civil institutions."[2] Such ideas about democracy, in which the rights of the individual are overlooked, appear also in Soviet theorizing on the subject.

The willess submission of the individual to the community seems to have been born out of the conviction of the Russian Orthodox faith, the religion of the great masses of the people for centuries, that truth resides in the brethren as a whole congregation. That is, the spirit does not express itself even in the agreement of the majority, but only in the agreement of all, and that the most the individual can do is to interpret the spirit in humility and to submit. This conception is reflected in the unanimity practice of Soviet democracy, in the self-effacement of the individual in the participation of the whole under the direction of the Communist Party. Another aspect of it is the Dostoyevskian idea that one suffers for the sins of all and all for the sins of one.

It may well be argued that these peculiarly Russian qualities were strangely opposed to the revolutionary individualism, the nihilism, even the anarchism of the 1860's and 1870's, represented by such figures as Herzen, Chernyshevsky, and Bakunin. But these trends were essentially importations from the West. And like Marxism, another Western importation, they were eventually compelled to conform to an indigenous blueprint of Russian thought and action, very much as Dostoyevksy amalgamated Slavophilism and Westernism in order to achieve a wholly native mystique.

In short, the sense of the community in Russia has always been more significant than individual rights. In both the old and new Russia it has been traditional to exalt the place of the community in both social and political life and to stress the collective character of rights and obligations. And neither the old nor new Russia, unlike the West in its democratic thinking, has ever accepted the position of the individual as the supreme arbiter of life, or the individual conscience as the ultimate moral censor. Nor have the Soviet rulers, any more than the tsars, been able, as govern-

[2]A. S. Khomyakov, *Sobranie sochinenii*, Moscow, 1900, V, p. 106.

ments in the West have, to work out an acceptable compromise between freedom and authority, for freedom there has always tended to degenerate into anarchy and authority into despotism, with the result that rulers evince a general disrespect for law and citizens a tendency to evade it.

II

Though all these aspects are peculiar to both the old and new Russia, it should be understood that Soviet theorists, in developing the relation of freedom to authority, have transcended traditional Russian thinking on the subject by applying to it the doctrine of Marx. Properly regarded, Marxism is an outgrowth of nineteenth century Western liberalism, and as a program for action in the minds of early Russian Marxists it comprehended liberal views on such matters as authority and the freedom of the individual. The 1903 Party declaration of Russian Marxists included a Bill of Rights providing for unrestricted freedom of conscience, of speech, press, association, and the right to strike.[3] And such rights were regarded as ends in themselves, and not merely as means to the end of socialism. Even in the first few stormy years after the revolution, these traditional democratic freedoms, in the face of encroaching party power, were hotly debated in public. The Communist theorists who argued for repressive measures then did not have recourse to Marxism; nor did it occur to them, as E. H. Carr suggests, to seek support in Rousseau's identification of society and the state, which posited an all powerful "general will" from which it was treason for the individual to dissent.[4] On the contrary, they appealed to prerevolutionary liberal Russian legalists, such as S. A. Kotlyarevski and V. N. Kistyakovski, who preached that no government, whatever its political form or social structure, could submit to its own destruction, simply in order to manifest its devotion to legal foundations. They argued, like democratic constitutional lawyers in a national emergency, that the powers of government cannot be limited by the subjective rights of its citizens, for the demands of the higher good of all must be the sole criteria for governmental action, and if this meant a deprivation of civil liberties, then the government had right on its side.

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[3]See VKP(b) v *Rezolyutsiyakh,* 3rd ed., pp. 16 ff.

[4]See Edward Hallett Carr, *The Soviet Impact on the Western World,* New York, 1947, pp. 1-19.

It is quite difficult to say how sincere were the Marxist leaders in the first years of the Soviet revolution in their attitude toward individual freedom and the limitation of authority. In Soviet writings at that time one often gets the impression that repressive measures were employed solely because of the violent opposition to the new regime from within and without, and that once this was overcome—and it was sometimes believed that it would soon be overcome—then there would be a reversion to the traditional democratic freedom admired by the early Russian Marxists. Little support, however, can be found for such notions in Lenin's writings or actions. He never envisaged even the immediate goal of socialism, as did some of his followers both in Russia and abroad, as a state of society which would bring about the best ideals of justice, freedom, and equality. These could be hoped for only in the final phase of socialism—communism. Only in the distant communist society, when distribution according to work done would give place to distribution according to needs, would enforced discipline become voluntary and the dictatorial organs of the state be replaced by free communal self-government. For Lenin, Marxism was a weapon to be used to achieve communism, and he was fully prepared to sacrifice all democratic and humanitarian principles to gain that end, for he was convinced that moral forces can never work independently of social organization. In such a scheme of things true freedom and the state were incompatible, for the state—any state—is by definition coercive, and hence true freedom lies beyond the state, in the stateless society of communism.

All Marxian doctrinal matters aside for the moment, two factors influenced the development of the Soviet state over its first fifteen years of existence in a manner inimical to the preservation of democratic liberties. The first was the civil war, the intervention, and the prolonged hostility to the new regime of powerful foreign countries; the second was the internal struggle for power in the Communist Party. The first factor was logically, if opportunistically, used by the party to justify the suppression of liberties, in order to preserve the new state against its various foes, and such actions were always taken in the name of the dictatorship of the proletariat. When these fears were ultimately removed and the government had reason to feel confident of its own power, sanction for further authoritarian rule was sought in the assertion that the Soviet Union was surrounded by predatory capitalist states which at any time might attack

to overthrow a budding socialism. The Marxian anomaly of this situation has been frequently commented on: the coercive power of a so-called socialist state, instead of beginning to wither away as it approaches communism, is deliberately increased. Justification is found in Stalin's own peculiar interpretation of the conviction of Engels on this point—state controls will begin to wither away only when socialism has spread throughout the major capitalist countries of the world. Whatever real fears the Soviet government may still have of capitalist countries, compromise with them was always a peaceful possibility. Accordingly, one is left with the conviction that both domestically and internationally permanent insecurity, like permanent revolution, is a necessary factor in the Soviet design for perpetuating its own arbitrary authority.

III

A kind of corollary to this situation has been the emergence of the monolithic power of the Communist Party out of the struggle that took place after Lenin's death in 1924. Stalin, of course, more than any single person, is the architect of this policy. And today, in a manner rarely evident before 1946, when the party seemed more content to exercise its authority behind the scenes, it now openly and blatantly publicizes itself daily throughout the Soviet Union as the sole source of all action, thought, and all blessings. Nothing could be more symbolic of the present complete domination of the party than its determination to rewrite the whole history of the Soviet Union as essentially the history of the party. For example, a statement in the recent outline of this newly projected textbook of the history of the U.S.S.R., which will be compulsory reading for millions of Soviet students, reads as follows:

> It is under party guidance that the peoples of the Soviet land have achieved all their triumphs—political, economic, military, and cultural. The least separation of the so-called civic history of the Soviet State from the history of the Bolshevik Party is therefore impermissible in principle and profoundly harmful. The entire process of our country's development must be continuously and organically linked in the book with the party of Lenin and Stalin so that the decisive role of Bolshevist leadership and its strength and invincibility may be shown vividly and convincingly through concrete historical facts.[5]

It is within the precise and narrow limits of absolute party control that one must seek for any understanding nowadays of theory and prac-

[5] *Voprosy istorii*, No. 7, July, 1950, p. 61.

tice in matters of authority and freedom in the Soviet Union. In short, there is a higher power, transcending government fiat or legal decrees, from which all human rights derive their ultimate sanction. Communism has often been called a faith, but it is little realized how completely the Communist Party has become a ruling theocracy in the Soviet Union. In his *Historical Materialism,* one of the early texts of Soviet Marxism, Nikolai Bukharin recognized this possibility when he wrote that "teleology leads straight into theology."[6] In fact, from the "idealism" of Marxism-Leninism, which is a natural concomitant of its supreme emphasis upon reason, there is but one step to faith in the supernatural, that is, to religion. This communist religion goes much beyond the medieval church, for it combines an infallible faith with a vast temporal power to enforce its dictates to which the church could never aspire. In this communist church Marx is God, Lenin the son, and Stalin the living pope. The Politburo is the College of Cardinals, and the six million party members a dedicated priesthood, bound to the faith with hoops of steel. The works of Marx and Engels are the Bible, and those of Lenin and Stalin the sacred patristic writings. Heresy is the worst offense, and the priesthood feels itself obligated, not only to guide the temporal and spiritual lives of the total population, but also to pry into their private morals. The heavenly goal toward which all the faithful strive, of course, is the communist heaven on earth.

A variation, however, is developing in this Soviet hierarchical scheme of things—the living pope Stalin tends to crowd the immortalized members of the pantheon. For Stalin is rewriting Marxian scriptures. In Soviet *belles-lettres* he is often represented as performing miracles, and the faithful believe in them in his own lifetime. He has become a universal father-image whose word is sacred. He is not only omnipotent, but also omniscent in all subjects, from gardening to philology. A kind of canonization seems to have overtaken him while still alive.

The Soviet constitutional limitations of authority and guarantees of freedom are comprehensible only when viewed in the light of this all-demanding communist faith. In fact, there is no separation whatsoever of the communist church and state in the Soviet Union, for the party is the ultimate source of all laws. For the dynamics of a state monolithically

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[6]Nicholas Bukharin, *Historical Materialism*, New York, 1925, p. 25.

controlled by a single party, require by the logic of absolute power that all human endeavors contribute, according to their abilities, to the success of the party's program, that is, to the further growth of its power. To expect anything other is to be politically naïve. Freedom of choice in such a situation is at best freedom of choice between degrees of acquiescence, never freedom of choice between acquiescence and opposition. This extra authority that derives from communist faith has imparted almost a mystical quality to the authority of the Soviet government. "Soviet rule," said a well known Soviet writer, V. Katayev, in a recent article,

> is not only a form of government. It is also a moral category. Gogol speaks about a "spiritual city." We must speak about a "spiritual government," about the "country of our spirit," where the personalities of the Soviet man and of the Soviet citizen are not opposed to one another. They are fused together not only in time and space, but—and this is the principal thing—in a great and eternal feeling of world justice.[7]

It is necessary to state these facts, for in reality there exists an implicit contradiction between the party and the government in the theory and practice (mostly in the practice) of freedom and authority in the Soviet Union. Authority and freedom, for example, are defined by law, but the party is above the law, and will often take it into its own hands to violate guaranteed freedoms. Thus, in the 1938 edition of the Soviet Political Dictionary, democracy is defined as

> . . . a people's government, political order, under which the power belongs to the people. Authentic democracy is possible only in a Soviet Socialist State. Soviet socialist democracy is actual peoples' government. All of the governmental power in the U.S.S.R. belongs to the workers of the cities and the country represented by the Soviet Union of Workers' Deputies. Stalin's Constitution is the only real democratic constitution in the world. In the U.S.S.R. humanity has for the first time in the world realized the equality of all workers regardless of sex, nationality, and race. The rights of citizens and political freedom under Soviet socialist democracy are provided by the economic strength of the land of socialism, the powerful apparatus of the Socialist State, and by moral-political unity of the Soviet people under the leadership of the working class headed by the Communist Party. The working masses of the cities and the country actively participate in the administration of the Soviet Government. The people and the government of the U.S.S.R. are one.

The aspect that strikes one as unusual in this definition is the emphasis placed on the identity of the government and the people, headed by

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[7] *Literaturnaya gazeta*, November 7, 1947.

the Communist Party, and that the rights of citizens derive from the state and are supported by the economic strength of the land of socialism. Nothing is said specifically of the rights of the individual to life and liberty, or of the right of the individual to dissent, even from majority decisions, if he cares to. In fact, the individual is lost sight of and the state is exalted.

In its fundamental essence, then, Soviet democracy is diametrically opposed to our conception which derives essentially from the thinking of eighteenth and nineteenth century English philosophers. Our notion of democracy is based on the rights of the individual against both church and state. The right to dissent—or in other words the protection of minorities—is the very heart of English and American democracy. And the rule of law means with us, in its democratic aspects, the enforcement of the rights of the individual against the state. Freedom for us means a minimum interference with individual liberty of action either by the moral coercion of public opinion, or by legal penalties imposed by the state.

The 1936 Soviet Constitution, it is true, also guarantees the rights of the individual, but always subject to the ultimate control of the Communist Party or, in actuality, the party summit—the Politbureau. To be sure, through a vast network of organizations, the party constantly gathers information on popular reactions, probing the will of the masses; and it associates considerable sections of the people with it in the process of implementation and execution of government policies. However, ultimate political authority in the Soviet Union is a party privilege only, exercised by the top party organs without the possibility of any effective check by the people. In a sense, though not entirely so, the whole vast superstructure of government is a "democratic" façade, intricately contrived, to perpetuate the power of the Communist Party or, more precisely, that of its leaders. The most that can be said for "democracy" in this process is that, through the governmental structure, the people are actively associated with the propagation and execution of policy and are instilled with a growing sense of participation in the process of rule.

The rights of the individual, guaranteed by the 1936 Constitution, appear to be well enough protected through the normal operations of justice in the courts in matters of ordinary crime and litigation, but in those offenses considered to be crimes against the people, the Soviet Union

is still a police state. Secret police, unwarranted search, arbitrary arrest, deprivation of movement, labor decrees, labor camps—all are violations of individual freedom inconsistent with the guarantees of the Constitution.

IV

From what has been said above, it should be clear that any appraisal of the operation and effect of authority and freedom today in the Soviet Union may require a political and ideological algebra not entirely suited to the solution of such problems in the West and America. It is easy to dismiss the matter by saying that Lenin and his followers set out to achieve for humanity the goals of freedom and equality by means of an organization that ended by denying these same principles. The means may have murdered the ends, but suppose these ends are passionately believed not only by the Communist Party, but by millions of nonparty citizens in the Soviet Union—and there is some evidence to this effect? Where faith begins, reason ends. It was faith and not reason that permitted the first Soviet Commissar of Education, Lunacharsky, to declare: "Our Central Committee can never make a mistake."[8]

Thus Marxism is the only truth, and the Central Committee, the Politbureau, Stalin, are the "bearers of the word." In such circumstances the very controls that emanate from this authority may be accepted on faith by the masses; they may in fact become convictions.

Only some such explanation, it would appear, can account for Soviet accomplishments in the creative arts and sciences, and, if this view has any validity, in other human endeavors as well. For it is hardly conceivable that monolithic government authority, severely limiting individual freedom and supported by an all-powerful police system, could drive a whole nation to prodigies of human labor. And it is also difficult to accept the explanation that the Russian masses are conditioned to strict authority and are not particularly interested in individual liberties, so long as the material necessities of life are provided. Further, it is possible to argue that the numerous incentive appeals of the government would offer a still more plausible explanation for the various mass accomplishments which have taken place in the Soviet Union.

On the other hand, it is difficult to understand how the creative spirit

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[8]A. Krivosheva, *Esteticheskiye vzglyady A. V. Lunacharskovo*, Moscow, 1939, p. 125.

of man as manifested in the arts and sciences can function successfully while completely regimented, unless it draws its inspiration from faith in the system that controls it. Though it is customary in America to dismiss Soviet creative accomplishments as trivial, much of high worth has been achieved in the arts and sciences. Nor is this to deny that in the creative arts in the Soviet Union there are many timeservers who prostitute their talents to the latest party "line." But there is still a very respectable residue of achievement on the part of great artists and scientists whose sincerity of belief in communism it is hard to doubt.

That is, the proposition must be squarely faced, with all its implications, that many Soviet creative artists and thinkers may have come quite seriously and honestly to accept as convictions what at first may have been regarded by them as hostile controls of the communist government under which they live. Are we too far removed from the kind of religious faith that turns the ends achieved by instruments of control into fighting convictions? Though art cannot serve propaganda, propaganda can serve art by giving it a renewed meaning and purpose, and a new virility. After all, the cathedrals of Notre Dame and Chartres are in a real sense glorious artistic monuments to Christian propaganda. The religious controls over Christian art in the Middle Ages did not prevent the flourishing of the creative spirit. A Shostakovich in the Soviet Union today might be just as sincere in recanting artistic heresy and in accepting party dictates in music as a Fra Lippo Lippi who, with Christ in his heart but a spirit too weak for the temptations of the flesh, finally humbled himself before the controls of the church and went back to his paint brushes with renewed faith in God.

And one might point out another analogy that has bearing on the problem. In the Middle Ages society was sure of the church; it provided a definite pattern of life that took man hopefully from the cradle to the grave. Men did not wish to escape the controls of the church; on the contrary, these controls had become convictions, for they had come to be accepted on faith.

To a considerable extent the same may be true in the Soviet Union with regard to the party. Life is officially represented as sure, and the future is always presented in a hopeful light as all struggle toward the great "Age of Communism." Under such conditions, for the creative spirit art and life become one. There is no more desire to escape from

a socialist art than there was to escape from a Christian art in the Middle Ages. Your good Soviet Communist would wonderingly ask: "What is there to escape to?"

Clearly, the relation between freedom and authority in such a system is that between faith and the source of faith. But the source is the Soviet Communist Party, and as it can compel both secular and spiritual obedience, there can be no freedom of choice to believe or not to believe. Opposition is always "minority opposition," which is condemned because the exercise of authority is always represented as for the good of the collective—for all. And collective privileges ("freedoms") from the state always require collective responsibilities to the state. There can be no limit to such absolute authority, except through the desire of the leaders to preserve their personal power.

To point out the influences throughout the world of this Soviet conception of freedom and authority would be a special task, outside the scope of this paper. On the one hand, some of the most advanced and salutary economic and social legislation over the past twenty years in the West and America would have been unthinkable without the tremendous challenge of Soviet communism. On the other hand, democratically minded peoples must view with alarm the growing tendency among the free countries to fight the worst authoritarian abuses of Soviet communism by employing variants of them in their own methods. In more ways than one the Soviets seem to be turning the old axiom that "Power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely," into a new modern axiom that "Power expands and absolute power expands absolutely."

We Thought At Least the Roof Would Fall

By LESLIE MELLICHAMP

In final grandeur
Pulverizing all.

Or the end would be as dire
As annihilating fire.

Or a hurricane would hurl it at the moon.

So we kept our tendons tense
For the final thrill,
While the boards fell off the fence
And the termites ate the sill.

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World Law and World Reform

By SUSANNE K. LANGER

We see with growing dismay the increase of military organization everywhere in the world. The fear of war is not the only cause of our dismay; it is even more motivated by the effect of this militarism on individual lives in times of so-called "peace." Taxation increases so that most people find no margin of income left to improve their lives, or to carry out cherished ideas; restrictions and embargoes make personal projects difficult, and every move, if not flatly forbidden, requires a license, so that any original venture, no matter how harmless or even philanthropic, has to be examined first of all for possible conflicts with this or that trivial law or local ordinance.

Such governmental control is symptomatic of a shift in the general conception of law, from the idea of law as an instrument to protect individual rights, to the idea of law as an instrument whereby the government can immediately find, control, and utilize every person. In some countries, the latter conception is traditional; laws were never for the protection of individual rights. In some other countries, however, personal freedom has once been achieved and honored, but is lost—the shift to military ideals and the corresponding conception of law is complete. In our own country that development is still taking place, but, other things being equal, its completion is only a matter of time: law is no longer essentially a guarantee of individual freedom, defining its limits but also its scope; the power of law is becoming more and more the power of the government to abrogate personal rights, to demand any percentage of personal income and allocate it according to political plans, to exact from all citizens vows of conformity in political thought, and

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interrupt men's personal careers just in the years of their launching, breaking their first impetus, by forced military service.

In the apprehension of this disastrous trend, even an active and enterprising people, impatient of philosophical problems, must of necessity stop to consider the general relationship of freedom and authority, with the hope of discovering how the increasing opposition between them may be resolved.

The first step is, of course, to understand the situation that inspires the new attitude of private persons toward authority, and of governments toward human beings. I think this situation may be summed up by saying that all mankind is in a stage of transition from its age-long economic organization by relatively self-sufficient units (tribes, principalities, countries, even empires) to a new economic organization of industries and commercial exchanges embracing the whole globe. The terrible tension that marks our age arises from a severe time-lag between the economic order which has sprung up and spread out with the sudden growth of science, and the political order which still presupposes the old values of self-sufficiency and separateness. The political pattern today does not mirror the actual state of society; and since political institutions are the greatest and steadiest symbols of moral values (wherefore emotion is so readily directed toward them), people's moral ideas and feelings today are largely unrealistic. Our interests are global, our consciences are tribal. Our activities reach round the world, our morality stops at a national boundary. This holds, I think, for industrialized societies everywhere on earth.

The old regionalism produced a number of cultural values—social solidarity, social rights codified into a system of laws, and especially the authority of civil government to implement the laws. In the security of such institutions the ideal and the reality of personal freedom developed; and under civil law, industry and commerce grew up.

In the new age of science, they have grown to global proportions, wiped out the fixed local limits of economic needs and resources, outgrown every realm of civil government and therewith the controls of statute law. For in the larger world of our modern economy there is no authority to limit rights and guarantee them. Material interests—acquiring raw materials, processing, distributing, marketing—go on in the

society of nations without the aid of legal machinery to adjudicate the conflicts that naturally arise all the time between major enterprises.

It has consequently become the prime function of governments to uphold the claims of their citizens to the legally unprotected goods of the world, forcing the issue, wherever necessary, by threats or acts of violence. With the opening up of isolated places to physical access, that function has become more and more difficult to perform. The actual unity of the world-wide economy makes every threatening gesture an ultimatum not only to the government guarding the particular rival claimant, but to the sovereign protectors of all creditors of both disputants. There does not even need to be any mutual hate or warlike spirit to involve two countries in an international crisis; the rivalry is there, it is inherent in the economic exploitation of the globe, and there is no institution that provides "an instrument to which the wise and honest may repair." The only instrument of settlement is military power.

The cultivation of such power is, therefore, the necessary first concern of all societies that lay claim to anything tangible in the world—even to wealth that still lies buried in their mountains and forests, the oil under their deserts, the very hides on the backs of creatures in their swamps.

But military power rests on potential mass action. Governments, therefore, must regard their citizens as masses to be deployed; and they cannot regard them equally as individuals to be served. One cannot maintain two such different attitudes at once for any length of time. This is the cause of the shift from the conception of authority as protection of private rights to the conception of authority as the power to abrogate private rights, dictate arbitrary duties, forbid enterprises, and control speech and association. The demand put upon every sovereign state to guarantee its nationals their power to act without legal right in the world at large, has made the sacredness of legal rights at home impossible to uphold.

The essence of civil order is law, supported by a generally approved and welcomed (though not necessarily elected) authority; an authority with power to coerce individuals flouting its dictates, but generally supported by uncoerced assent. Police power is not founded on supreme force, but on public moral support. It does not hold the strongest weapons and hordes of men. The essence of military order, on the other hand, is law dictated by an imposed authority with power to coerce the entire

public at any or all times. Its law rests upon supreme force, and operates just as long as that force can be maintained.

As long as governments are absolutely free and increasing in physical power, individuals must become less and less free to do anything but serve their governments. If, therefore, we want to save personal freedom in the new integrated economic world, we must have a different system of decisions and sanctions in that world; it is a staggering fact, but an ineluctable one, that nothing short of world reform can stem the growth of modern militarism. A world geared for industry and commerce—whether private or public is immaterial—requires a system of civil law as extensive as the interests to be protected; that is, an authority that can guarantee the integrity of each agent, and adjudicate the extravagant claims of all economic rivals.

In the breakdown and confusion of the present political pattern, many movements for world reform have been proposed and even started. Most of them seek to abolish the material ambitions that drive men and nations into conflict. Many are based on the hope of educating all people to understand each other. But neither unnatural ambitions nor misunderstanding lie at the roots of our moral and political failure; the trouble lies in obsolete institutions. And I submit that the adoption and implementation of civil world law is the only world reform that is a reasonable political goal.

A great political reform demands a great vision. What I mean by a great vision is not a dream of Utopia to be achieved five hundred years from now by moral education, but a long-range policy to establish a political order suitable to the needs of our world-wide industrial civilization.

Almost as soon as you mention such a new order, someone is sure to say: "There's no use talking about it as long as certain states act the way they do." That is a good common-sense remark; and like most common-sense opinion, it rests on a close-up view of immediate conditions. That is the obvious view for short-range policies. But a big project is not fitted to momentary conditions. The political picture changes every year, every month. There are times when no particular move can be made. Do we have to abandon our purposes at such times? No; at such times we must do that hard intellectual work which underlies consistent good practice—study our purposes and pare them down to their essentials,

and then hold on to those essentials as the measure of every specific move we advocate or make.

If the essentials of a policy are understood, you can keep its ultimate aims in sight; but if only the aims are stated, and stated vaguely, in words of emotional value—to make people free, give them security, bring peace, brotherhood, cooperation, and so forth—you have nothing to work with. Such principles are not precise enough to be recognized in specific cases of political action. The slogan, "to bring men peace," does not describe any particular project, but can be related, by mental association, to every proposal that contains the word "peace." It is notorious that in every major conflict both sides have claimed to be making society free or safe for this or that.

In a long-range program of social reform there must be one goal on which all activities converge, and this goal must be such that its achievement, when it does take place, will be a definite social event, not a general condition that some people claim to see and others don't, like a "new humanity" or "a new sense of brotherhood." In other words, the aim of a reform must be institutional. Perhaps mankind cannot be reformed; but the institutions under which men live, can and often have been.

Every era of history has had its special, intolerable evil to combat. Such besetting ills of society are usually very old, and have always been accepted, until a change in economic conditions exaggerates them so they suddenly threaten the very existence of nations. In the Middle Ages, the desperate evil of the times was pestilence. There had always been illness, pain, even epidemics, but they were considered inevitable and accepted as the will of God. But with the growth of cities in Europe, epidemics took on new proportions: the Black Death became a nightmare that threatened to depopulate the civilized world. No one kept vital statistics at that time, but it was clear to everybody that more people died than were born. Something had to be done. The medical profession had to go into strenuous action, study the causes of epidemics, and educate an ignorant, superstitious, almost immobile public to accept a new knowledge that terrified the average person only a little less than the Black Death itself. Princes and their viceroys had to act to change ways of living which spread the plague; houses were condemned, funerals forbidden, the sick taken forcibly from their relatives. Against fearful resistance, the device of vaccination was developed on principles introduced from Turkey.

There was long campaigning for and against it. But medical success in many directions finally begot one social success: sanitary laws and controls—that is, new social institutions. These made life viable again, despite the urban culture that had let pestilence get so far out of hand.

Another example of evil that grew suddenly from new economic conditions, and had to be met by social reform, is the heart-breaking episode of child labor in the early days of machine industry. There had always been overworked children, stunted little waifs who died early of consumption; but their fate remained a matter of individual tragedy, and did not threaten the health and progress of society, until the demand for children in factories made such misery the lot of the average child of poor parents. Then the fatal effect of this inhuman exploitation became apparent. The poor became a sick, helpless, miserable majority in civilized society. An evil that was as old as mankind had suddenly, in a new economic setting, grown out of all proportion, and become intolerable.

Again, a reform was absolutely necessary. Again there were pessimists who explained why the evil, which was rooted in the economic order itself, could never be stemmed unless humanity abandoned its machines and returned to hand labor, et cetera, and optimists who thought they could move the hard hearts of employers. But there also were certain cool-headed realists, who saw that the evil lay essentially with the law, which treated children as the absolute property of their parents, defining no personal rights of infants. These realists used moral appeal not to reform factory owners, but to enlist the voting public for their cause, which they carried straight to the legislative chambers. Industrialists are probably no better today than they were in 1800, and the factory system is here to stay, but the horror of child labor has disappeared with the reform of obsolete institutions.

Today the civilized world is faced again with an evil which has always existed, but has suddenly, because of new economic conditions, assumed a new, virulent form, so that it threatens to destroy us. That is the time-honored institution of international warfare.

Most people do not realize that war is an institution. They think of it as an outburst of passion, which could be avoided if men learned to control themselves and to understand each other. But diplomats do not often lose control of themselves or let prejudices and ignorance of other cultures drive them into misunderstandings; yet wars are generally made

by diplomats—kings, premiers, presidents, or other leading personages and their cabinets—and not by public pressure. The pressure of common sentiment is really turned on and off by the news service, which is the only source of popular information and therefore of all political excitements. Wars are prepared; they are not spontaneous outbursts or diplomatic mistakes.

Warfare is, in fact, the trump card in the game of international diplomacy. The game cannot be played without trumps. You cannot accept the system of diplomatic negotiations among sovereign powers, and somehow at the same time—by education and reform—eliminate the use of force which is the proof of any government's status as a sovereign power. For this reason, the use of force is always planned for and prepared, even in times of peace. The threat of violence is the accepted means of backing claims in the concert of nations, as suit and judgment are in civil life.

International war, then, is an institution. In the accepted scheme of world politics it is taken as such, and invested with proper symbols of its dignity and importance. There are ministries of war and countless executives; every citizen of a sovereign state holds some position in relation to his country's war-power, that is, every one is either a military person or a civilian.

Nothing—no royal personage, no court of justice, no priesthood—enjoys more prerogatives than a military high command in time of war. A military hero is a popular idol, a pacifist is a despised person who may even be officially punished. I need not elaborate these proofs that warfare is an accepted function of the state; anyone can see them. War is the most celebrated institution in the world.

It is also the most expensive; and as it grows to giant size, among the giant states of a furiously active industrial world, where rival claims and arrogant demands are the order of the day, the cost of preparing it soars above the cost of all other human enterprises put together. But that, of course, is only a preamble. The preparations are not out of proportion to what they are made for.

There have always been wars among sovereign powers—tribes, kingdoms, republics, or empires. The world has taken their cost and their physical effects of death and ruin somehow in its stride. Civilization progressed in spite of wars. They were part of the pattern: a summary

and natural settlement of disputes among parties who recognized no instrument to settle them otherwise. The pattern of war and peace is certainly as old as the hills.

But today that world-old pattern of absolute power and its assertion by violence is in a fair way to destroy civilization. Like the Black Death, the scourge of war has been stimulated by new social conditions to outgrow its normal size, and made all traditional ways of meeting and enduring it entirely inadequate. The modern world, which functions as one industrial network, cannot endure the anarchy of absolute powers and the immense destruction of their feuding, and continue to function.

The long-range policy I am proposing is not a moral campaign against conflict and violence as such, but an attack upon the institution of war among sovereign states. It is this accepted, prepared, and organized use of violence that threatens to destroy our world—not the flare of popular passion that culminates in bloody riot, nor even the secretly prepared and often terrible revolt of factions against an oppressive government. We cannot change human nature, but we can change institutions.

Every institution, of course, serves a purpose, and cannot be simply abolished by fiat. We can do away with it only by instituting something else—some other device that serves the same purpose without the ruinous means. In this case, probably the only device that will serve us is the one long known in domestic affairs—a controlling authority, under whose auspices quarrels are normally settled by court action. That is the basic pattern of all civil life; laws and legal procedures may vary, but the essence of civil order is the same in every country. Living under any such order, we may hate our rivals as much as we will and struggle to ruin them, but to speak of "cut-throat competition" is none the less a mere metaphor; the difference between a lawful and a lawless society is precisely that in the former, competition has to stop short of actual throat-cutting, and in the latter it does not have to stop at anything.

The objection has often been made that war is a natural phenomenon, some men will always fight, and if international war is abolished by delegating the highest power to a supreme authority, there will simply be civil wars instead. I think there will, indeed, always be some violence —riots, even organized fighting, occasionally a full-fledged civil war. But there is an all-important difference between international war and civil war. International war is an institution, prepared and implemented at

enormous expense even in times of peace. Civil war, on the other hand, is a failure of institutions. When a civil war is over, the pattern of civilian life is resumed. The United States has had one of the worst civil wars in history, and still feels its economic and emotional effects. Yet the line between the northern and the southern states is still unfortified. There are no huge appropriations made each year to prepare for further violence. Civil war is a breakdown of social machinery, which may happen of course, because no machinery is perfect; but civilization does not crumble under an occasional breakdown of its legal or administrative devices. It can survive accidents. What it cannot survive is the system of sovereign diplomacy, in which war is no accident, but the official instrument of major settlements.

What we must achieve, then, is another instrument of political intercourse among nations—a civil order in which dealings are regulated under some impartial authority. But how can one even begin such a task? Must we sweep the old order away first? And what sort of global order should we then set up? Some people speak of a limited world-government; what should be its duties, and what the limits of its power? Every person conceives it in the image of his own country's government. Consequently, one dreams of a Christian world-state and another of a supreme Soviet and still another of a two-chamber parliamentary government speaking Basic English. Some believe its functions should be limited to "keeping the peace" (however one does that), and others think it should guarantee every person in the world a job with a living wage and a pension.

Obviously we have to operate with some principle by which we can construct a definite plan for a global authority, instead of falling back on a hodgepodge of familiar models for a project so different from any of them. Now, one way of clarifying and simplifying the pattern of the projected civil order is to consider its prime purpose, which is to give us a universally valid, universally binding, and adequate law of nations. This moves the world-court into the center of the picture. And the principle I would propose is this: *everything necessary to establish an effective system of world courts, facilitate resort to them, and make their decisions binding, is essential to civil world order; everything else is at present unessential.* If we make the administration of justice our central aim, the elements of world order are implied; we shall have to establish just as much legislative, executive, and protective power as the effective function-

ing of the courts requires. This simplifies the whole project so one can keep its main lines in sight at all times.

The constitution of such a new order should be composed by the world's greatest jurists and statesmen. It is no task for amateurs. But its actual acceptance must be prepared and finally achieved by all citizens of the world who are free to participate in political moves at all. The slow pressure of votes with a conscious steady tendency in one direction, reinforced by occasional acts of statesmanship, could bring a civil world-state into being. For the need is obvious; and, moreover, much preliminary work has already been done. We do not have to overthrow any existing government, sweep away old constitutions and so on, to achieve our aim. A series of reforms, all with the same purpose, are a surer way to a new political pattern than throwing away the past and starting something new from scratch. One is too apt to get no further than the throwing away. It is wiser to use everything that can be used.

The greatest international institution that has existed in modern times is the United Nations. It is not a civil world government, but it has the seeds of that higher political life in it. Five steps, indeed, could turn it into a United World Organization: 1) Extend membership to *all* nations; 2) Make the General Assembly a legislative body with power to adopt a constitution; 3) Give the World Court the power of summons, and make its decisions binding; 4) Set up a high secretariat (or other executive) to administer world interests; 5) Internationalize all armed force, setting up a federal guard (not enlisted by national units) and allowing the several nations reasonable national police guards of their own, for domestic use.

These are all radical steps, and not simple; but they are the goals toward which our activities must be directed. They all have the advantage of requiring reforms rather than experiments. The first—universal membership—is simply an extension of what already exists. The second—the institution of a legislative body—is a radical step, but it has the present General Assembly as its natural starting point. The third, which is at the heart of the whole project, would elevate a World Court that already exists, and simply means treating the functions of that court with full seriousness. The fourth, the establishment of a greater executive branch, would take place naturally by the growth of offices already established, as the function of the Assembly required more administrative work. The

fifth reform—the abandonment of vast military powers—is the most generally misconceived. Strange as it may sound, it would probably be easier than anyone supposes; for if the idea of a civil world order is good at all, the end of the diplomatic and military system would be its natural result. It would become as irrational to build bombers and manufacture atomic weapons as it is today to install cannon or flame-throwers to protect rich men's houses. In the Middle Ages such defenses were necessary; rich men's houses were castles. They had moats and walls, lookouts and battlements. There was no court to deal with robbers, all police power was private, resting on strength of arms without public support. Today, when a civil authority stands behind the policeman, we need not keep even heiresses in a tower. I don't think any government ever forbade castles, but we do not build them any more.

The need of military power arises from the fact that national statehood is not a vested right. Under a World Constitution, every nation would have defined and assured rights of political existence. Instead of its present precarious sovereignty it would have its inviolable autonomy.

One must not overlook the fact that a new political setup creates a new mentality. Citizens of a state that exists in the frame of a larger organization do not think and feel like citizens of a lone and exposed state. It is hard to imagine today that military power could ever be obsolete, and simply romantic. But in a civil world this would happen very soon. There might be disarming ceremonies in the General Assembly or there might not, but after a period of vigilance to prevent secret manufacture of atomic weapons, their immense cost and the bizarre appearance of plans to use them in a civil society would end the danger.

Above all, there would be other means than diplomacy and war to achieve one's ends—other forms of conflict and competition, no doubt, attack and revenge—but without mass destruction and the death of countless people not really interested in the ends. There would be lobbying and jockeying for positions and the same old fighting spirit. Humanity will probably never improve. But under a civil order, it could live, as now the greater part of it cannot. Besides, it might even improve. It is a great mistake to think that institutions merely reflect our sentiments and attitudes, and are made by them. In a way, the contrary is true. Sentiments and attitudes are largely inspired, and certainly given form and permanence, by the institutions under which we live. Religious rights

define and develop our religious feeling; patriotic ceremonies beget patriotic feeling: and a civil world order would implement the ideals of universal brotherhood which now conflict with the political institutions that really exist. In every religious or moral advance, the symbol must precede the fact; and a United World will command loyalty as soon as it is a reality to which people can cleave.

The civil authority itself would not require great force. Authority has the latent force of the public will behind it; in this way it differs from power, in the military sense. In a civil society the police force is such a small part of the population, that it could not possibly control a populace that really resisted it; but it can deal with serious defiance because actually its strength lies in the general public approval and support. Even a largely dissatisfied public may still acknowledge an established constitutional authority rather than risk anarchy, or the operation of pure power. The military force that would support the global administration would become essentially a guard of honor, symbol of every country's vested autonomy, the first army to seek no victories, but to implement the law of nations and protect a universal peace.

Gentleman Retired

By JOSEPH JOEL KEITH

Not now. No, please. Not now.
I have thanked you twice before.
Don't knock. I can't see as how
I can ask you past the door.
I've listened to words. No more.

When I think of the words I said
and the words I listened to
I wonder the tongue isn't dead,
or the mind. Small talk comes through
small minds. Now go. I'm through.

If only folks would sit,
be still, content to be,
say life when they're part of it.
They come to gab, not to see.
They can't hear the Lord, or me.

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The Reputation of David Graham Phillips

By LOUIS FILLER

WITH THE ASSASSINATION of the novelist Phillips, early in 1911, contemporary criticism of his work came to an end in what must seem, from the present and informed perspective, a startling fashion. It is true that ruling opinion about him as a literary figure had never held him much more than lightly. Still, the details of his public life would seem to have made so swift a descent of silence impossible. His intimate relationship to the major literary and political impulse of the past decade, muckraking, his several novelistic sensations, at least one journalistic feat, "The Treason of the Senate" series which had shaken American politics and set in motion the movement which culminated in the passage of the Eighteenth Amendment to the Constitution—such facts and others should have been sufficient to have begun a general, and perhaps thoughtful, evaluation of his life and work.

"If Phillips was a great writer," worried one journal in 1912, then the latest of his posthumous novels, *The Price She Paid,* would not add to his laurels. But who had suggested that he was "great"? Setting aside the enthusiastic comments which any writer and any book can obtain, and setting aside Senator Albert J. Beveridge, Phillips' intimate friend and, strictly speaking, no critic—no one had.

There were writers and editors who appreciated elements of Phillips' work, if only its sales-value; and one at least gave him every attention. As early as 1903, Benjamin Orange Flower, editor of the *Arena,* one

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LOUIS FILLER, Book Review Editor of *The Antioch Review*, expects ultimately to publish a biographical study of David Graham Phillips. His present article he terms "an essay in method." He contends that too much which passes for critical comment fails either to take into account the "long view" (which is the strength of academic work) or the immediate circumstances surrounding a topic in literature (which is the strength of journalism). Once these conditions have been acknowledged and the issue joined, intuitive impressions and clique opinions become somewhat more legitimate, he believes.

of the pioneer, if lesser, magazines of middle-class protest against monopoly, had hailed Phillips as a novelist of democracy. Flower, an impassioned and scholarly decrier of "political corruption" and "special privilege"—the two points of attack in those days of the Big Stick—was glad to welcome so earnest a writer who was so completely "American" in feeling and views. Of Phillips' literary virtues Flower was less certain. He recognized the "increasing strength" of Phillips' early novels and praised the detail of places and people that suffused them, but he missed the settled finish of the classics he loved. Unable, because of his political position, to deny the value of writing which was realistic about American life, uncompromising as to its business and politics, and positive with respect to its possibilities, Flower found a criticism of Phillips' work on the grounds of journalism—and reproved him for hasty writing: a grotesque charge that was to be attempted, as will appear, with less good will by other commentators.

Possibly exile from the storm and stress of the times might save Phillips for literature, Flower suggested, recalling Victor Hugo. Here was an odd suggestion from one who never tired of calling all good men and true to save the Republic. The suggestion is worth recording, for it can be found, in one form or another, in a wide variety of Phillips criticism. On various occasions, when discussing Phillips, Flower recalled Zola, Tolstoi, and Balzac, but never seems to have clarified for himself the question of just what elements should enter into an *American* art to give it strength and durability.

Of the aesthetes, headed by James Huneker, who also looked abroad for art, only one manifested any interest at all in the muckrakers or their efforts, and all had a tacit contempt for their ideas and methods. Percival Pollard, in *Their Day in Court* (1901), noted Phillips' existence, deplored the "documentation" in his work, and declared that it justified its existence, was worth watching . . . if only because it brought up memories of a novel, *The Road to Damascus,* by H. A. Mitchell Keays, an insignificant production which the present writer does not believe warrants discussion.

Pollard linked the name of Phillips not only with that of the American Winston Churchill (who was attempting to scale the heights by imitating Thackeray), but also with that of Robert W. Chambers. This was the most interesting accomplishment of Pollard's pages, for it aided

the most important legend of all concerning Phillips: a legend later defined in the "Magazine Shop-talk" section of *Cosmopolitan* for July, 1911.

Conservative opinion—if it can be distinguished from the Huneker-Pollard school of criticism—expressed itself with respect to Phillips once in telling fashion. Frederic Taber Cooper, imperturbable *Bookman* critic, advocate of "a good story," took Phillips in his stride. It is a sign of the times that with Huneker busy introducing Stendahl to American "highbrows" and fighting the battles of Shaw, it was left for a man of Cooper's caliber to put together a book with a contemporary emphasis, entitled *Some American Story Tellers* (1911).

> In any critical analysis of the life of the late David Graham Phillips [he remarked], it is well to recognize at the outset that he has been a rather important figure in the development of American fiction in recent years.

Cooper was undisturbed by the agitation of the Progressive Era, and had the leisure to ask himself just why the promise of Phillips' work was so much more than the fulfillment. He found the themes of Phillips' novels "confusing," and remembered Zola, who had simplified the symbols of his books (*The Probate Court, The Dinner Pail,* and so forth) more helpfully.

> In Mr. Phillips' books one feels the ethical purpose much more vaguely; he is always stimulating . . . more deeply perhaps when he most strongly antagonizes us. . . . Take for instance the best and strongest of all his books, *The Husband's Story*; even here the general public has groped rather helplessly to decide just what the author meant.

This, however, troubled him less than "the annoying fact that [Phillips] is trying to do our thinking for us"—an effort which set Cooper "tingling with annoyance." He summed up the matter as follows:

> There is a good deal of snobbery among our wealthy and fashionable class. . . . [Nevertheless] there is no useful purpose served in waxing indignant over people who happen to regulate their lives somewhat differently from the way in which you or I would regulate our lives.

Phillips was not only "forcing us to see them through the medium of his own eyes instead of directly from life," but, worse still, with "sordid, repellent, intimate little details." Here at last we meet the *Bookman* critic face to face: let Zola dissect the French to his heart's content, but let our own writers show a proper respect for American-born, and especially the well-born.

It has been thought desirable to cite Cooper at some length because he represents not only general critical opinion of Phillips' work during his lifetime, but does so systematically. In fact, Cooper showed himself more aware than some later, and better-known critics, of gradations in Phillips' work; and his opinion of what constituted "the most important" of Phillips' novels has some relevance in presenting them to those who have not otherwise made contact with them.[1] Cooper thought *The Second Generation* ("the best volume with which to introduce readers as less likely to antagonize") nothing more than a morality play in which the good people emerged triumphant, the evil vanquished and frustrated. He considered it "an open question whether . . . the method of presenting the problem [of *Old Wives for New,* a novel of incompatibility and divorce] might not have been improved upon." His opinion of the western politician in Washington, featured in *The Fashionable Adventures of Joshua Craig,* was that he was a vulgar boor. As for *The Hungry Heart* and *The Husband's Story,* "the most mature products of Phillips' talents," the first was "the familiar triangle," and its solution a disappointment: the husband could never have taken his wife back and lived with her on the old terms. The problem of *The Husband's Story* is somewhat more difficult to isolate in a phrase, and one can only state that Cooper, by applauding "the cleverest touch of Phillips' satire," emptied it of meaning by an impossible interpretation.

Lecturing Phillips on his own characters and situations, uninspired and unimpressed, Cooper completed the one purely aesthetic essay ever written about Phillips. It contained the rudiments of a literary training which might have been expected of a run-of-the-mill critic. When two decades of silence respecting Phillips as a novelist had passed, and the stirring of a new social criticism sent young people back to the pre-World War I period for records and guideposts, this essay was practically all that there was to read.[2]

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[1]See fn. 4.

[2]John C. McCloskey's unpublished thesis, "Social Criticism in the Novels of David Graham Phillips" (Stanford, 1939), contains an interesting introductory chapter which summarizes the conflicting literary opinions about Phillips. Its subsequent chapters, though useful, for the most part merely describe Phillips' attitudes and ideas. Qualitative and comparative estimates, when they appear, are personal and haphazard.

II

Of Phillips' personality little was known beyond the legend of his earnest and tireless work. Those who read his books, articles, and short stories imagined a highly serious man with violent ideas on life and politics, with a flair for realistic detail. As it happens, there was more to Phillips' personal life than work; but it may be said that for Phillips there was more romance to be found in "the canyons of Wall Street" and the day to day life of ordinary folk than in what seemed to him the histrionic exaggerations of traditional romance.

Many critics of influential journals were less certain of his sincerity. Phillips was accounted a snob, a sensation-monger, a dabbler in filth and calumny, a socialist, and even vain. His success was held up as necessarily the result of dishonest work. He was notorious for his "Treason of the Senate" series, his bitter fictional portrait of *The Master-Rogue*—an early and lesser work—and, increasingly, for his frank treatment of man-woman relations.

This is not to say that he lacked admirers. Progressives were likely to approve his politics, if not his frank discussions of sex. Victor Berger referred to him as "that earnest and apostolic writer." The point is that conservatives and radicals alike saw Phillips as a writer of theses, and no more, condemning or applauding his work on that basis. Phillips' writings as a magazine contributor and even as a journalist won as much attention as did his novels, at least in his first phase as a free-lance writer. No critic suggested that the aim might be art; all took at face value Phillips' mordant criticisms of the "artistic temperament," his ironical denials of the artist's right to a living, and his definition of writing as a "job." Yet it is worth considering whether Phillips, walking boldly in the ways of experiment and rude honesty, may not have been blazing a way for American writers. He and one other. Phillips and the early Theodore Dreiser are more easily compared than their methods and outlook would superficially indicate. Both were accused of writing petty journalism, without humor or a sense of proportion, about wretched and unimportant people. Professor Arthur H. Quinn, in his *American Fiction* (1937), repeated these charges against Dreiser, and reminds us that it was a second generation, headed by H. L. Mencken, and Dreiser's stubborn refusal to be stopped, among other factors, which made his fame.

One article about Phillips stands out of a setting of uninspired per-

sonal comment; it appeared in the *Saturday Evening Post* for October 21, 1911, after Phillips' death. Moved by the tragedy of Phillips' death, appreciative of his ambitions, Mrs. Anna Strunsky Walling, friend and collaborator of Jack London, told of her acquaintanceship with Phillips and gave testimony to the integrity of his personality.

Yet Mrs. Walling had only a secondary acquaintanceship with Phillips. Where were his friends? Phillips had not only been widely read; he had been widely known. For years he had been an honored metropolitan journalist, foreign correspondent, and newspaper editor. He had been one of the leaders of the loosely-formed group, whirlpooled together by the need of the times, called muckrakers. He himself had been the direct target for what was meant to be an epithet. Those who had passed through the editorial rooms of *The Arena, Cosmopolitan, McClure's, Pearson's,* and a dozen other journals, had been friends and associates, some for many years and intimately, as in the case of Charles Edward Russell. All logic would have foretold an unfolding of anecdote and estimate.

One explanation for their absence lies in Phillips' extraordinary reticence and reserve. Behind the stern features exhibited in his photographs, the harsh tone of some of his fiction, and the forthrightness of his polemics was a man of keen sensibilities who had more than the usual need for guarding his privacy. To Senator Beveridge he could write warmly, and to his family, and to some others. He could express hurt at uninformed and malicious criticism. He could go out of his way to praise other writers. For the rest, he was able to keep acquaintanceship within bounds that suited him.

An instance of this trait in Phillips shows itself in Booth Tarkington's letter to Isaac F. Marcosson, who was seeking memoirs of Phillips. Tarkington could not "to save myself" remember how he had met the novelist and Mrs. Carolyn Frevert, Phillips' sister and companion during his New York years. He had followed Phillips: been born and bred in Indiana, and gone to an Indiana college and then to Princeton. He knew "about" Phillips, he was certain. His first "definite" picture was of the annual banquet of the Periodical Publishers in 1905, but by that time he "knew him well and recall that I then regarded him as an intimate friend."

There were "blurred memories of dinners in New York" and then

the most trivial recollections of Phillips in Europe. Tarkington confessed that he really had nothing to tell. Phillips was there in his consciousness, a friend: "We talked of everything together, everything personal as well as everything general, and to me he was always like sunshine."

Phillips had died in the disintegrating days of the muckraking movement, which, born officially in 1902, reflected a great agitation within the middle class and those holding its views. Alarmed by the power of the trusts, which seemed to be destroying the old America—vivid and ideal in retrospect—heterogeneous groups of people drew together for a desperate rally against the monopolists. There was an excitement in the air, a new optimism. Journals on the verge of bankruptcy began selling in the tens of thousands; and the work of exposing monopoly practices, slum conditions, racial discrimination, police and political corruption, and other conditions, attracted hundreds and even thousands of journalists, cartoonists, novelists, and artists, as well as politicians and socially-minded people of the stamp of Robert La Follette and Clarence Darrow. The movement was infectious. It accounts for the turn taken in the work of authors like Edith Wharton and Booth Tarkington, normally high-society- and light-novelist respectively, who were touched to literary attempts concerning "conditions" and even working people. Guy Wetmore Carryl had earlier amused himself with the foibles of men, but Wallace Irwin, in the 1900's, turned a like wit to verse satirizing trusts and the vivid personalities of the reform period.

Phillips himself had come a long way in the ten years ended in 1911 by death. He had thrown off the pessimism which had infected him, as well as Dreiser, as a result of observing the social disorder of the 1890's from a journalist's standpoint. He had pulled himself through a fen of literary confusion which involved such elements as the genteel storytellers, the new realists and the newer naturalists, local-color writers and western patriots. The immediate result of Phillips' efforts to produce a national type of writing, based on general issues and a variety of characters, was to be a shabby exploitation of such freedom by scribblers like Robert W. Chambers.[3] Phillips himself stood uncertainly at crossroads

[3]Phillips' novels can best be judged, of course, by comparing them with other novels of weight and dimensions. For example, a comparison with the novels of Sinclair Lewis would be very pertinent. However, a comparison with contemporary novels

at the end of a most hectic period of literary labor. He had just written his strangest book, *The Price She Paid,* the most difficult to analyze for intention and possibilities. Several magazine articles indicate a new turbulence in his thought, a peculiar rechecking of old ideas and concepts.

Bohemia, curiously allied with socialism, was about to come alive. The fiddles, as the elder Yeats had said, were tuning up all over America, but they were to play some strange music. *The Masses* was to be a symbol of the younger generation as well as *Poetry,* John Reed as well as Ezra Pound. The muckraking movement had accomplished at least part of its work: in literature the destruction of the genteel tradition, so called, as a pivotal force, its replacement by a socially conscious writing. For the moment, muckraking was done, physically stamped out, its magazines had been bought up or ruined, and its writers were decamping for other regions.

World War I only completed a process already begun, and when the storm had passed, the muckrakers, not yet in the human decline, were seen to have been blown in many directions, mostly reactionary. George Kibbe Turner, for example, who had written distinguished journalism for *McClure's,* now wrote *Red Friday,* a silly and reactionary yarn. Finley Dunne lived to write his memories of President Harding, as though the creator of "Mr. Dooley" had nothing more significant to turn his hand to. Brand Whitlock had once written a notable novel, *The Turn of the Balance*; he now wrote another, *Uprooted,* the story of which is told in the title. Only a few of the old reform writers did not feel it necessary to alter or retire; Charles Edward Russell, Lincoln Steffens, and Upton Sinclair were outstanding among those who survived the deluge.

What resulted was a chasm between the old days of reform and their survivors. Muckraking lost its natural historians. This phenomenon, in terms of David Graham Phillips, meant forgetfulness.

There is then the spectacle of a dead man's work continuing to appear in what was practically a critical void, unsupported by any except

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would also be instructive as distinguishing his treatment of the sex, political, and business themes from that of others. Lisle A. Rose's "A Descriptive Catalogue of Economic and Politico-Economic Fiction in the United States, 1902-1909" (University of Chicago, 1935) is calculated to discourage casual judgments of Phillips' works. Unfortunately, it takes contrasting critical opinions too little into account, and with respect to Phillips limits itself to works pertinent to the thesis.

popular interest and by uncertain publisher's enterprise. Through 1911, 1912, and 1913, this state of affairs persisted and became intensified. John C. Underwood's *Literature and Insurgency,* published in 1914, was surprising but of little moment.

A word about this book, which has the distinction of being the one volume of literary criticism produced by the muckraking movement. It was born of a time when hardly anyone alive to social realities knew where politics ended and fiction began. It went to extremes in dislike of the milk and water style of Hamilton Wright Mabie and his familiars. It was rude in content and impossible in form. Yet it shouted the praises of Frank Norris, waxed ecstatic over the democracy of Mark Twain; and in words with one meaning denounced Robert W. Chambers as a commercialist. In the section devoted to Phillips, the author placed him in the forefront of American novelists. However, he mixed artistic and social values, repeated the injurious absurdity that Phillips' first novel, *The Great God Success* (1901), was one of his best, and ranked *The Hungry Heart* as a comparative failure, as "cramping the author's talent for large effects."

With the beginning of serial publication of *Susan Lenox* in 1915, the dead man exploded his last bomb. Copies of *Hearst's International Magazine* went at a premium, as *Cosmopolitan* had ten years before when "The Treason of the Senate" articles had stirred the country. As issued in book form in 1917, *Susan Lenox* was denounced as libelous and obscene, the *New York Times* reviewer being particularly bitter in his indictment. Only Frank Harris, a vigorous admirer of Phillips, counterattacked from the pages of *Pearson's.* This magazine was half an outlaw because of its unorthodox attitude on the war. In the influential press, there was but one article of praise, and that by Mr. Marcosson, which described the novel as "a Gash out of Life," and in similar phrases made it clear that *Susan Lenox* was quite alone in the world. The first edition was withdrawn, under pressure of the Society for the Suppression of Vice, and the novel reissued with a hundred pages cut out, in which form it continues in print today.

Thus criticism made an end. The younger writers were busy with their own affairs. An anarchy of opinion, bound to intensify for lack of substantial information, became the rule.

One example of this concerns H. L. Mencken, who in *Smart Set* for

January, 1910, had written of Phillips as "The Leading American Novelist":

> You will find in both of these stories [*The Hungry Heart* and *The Husband's Story*], and you will find, too, in other books by Mr. Phillips, though not in all of them, two qualities so rare in contemporary American fiction that the reader of current novels seldom encounters even faint traces of them. One is the quality of earnestness and the other is the quality of intelligence. Mr. Phillips writes as if novel-writing were a serious business, demanding preparation, reflection, ardor, skill. He seems to be firmly convinced that the people whose doings he is describing are real human beings, that their overt acts are the effects of deep-lying motives and causes, and that it is worthwhile to tunnel down into them and get all these motives and causes. He thinks! Contemplating his characters, he is led to meditate and philosophize upon the internal and external *stimuli* which make them what they are. And passing from what they are to what they represent, he investigates the general conditions of human existence in the United States, differentiating between things universal and things American, ferreting out material weaknesses, prying into the peculiar customs, vices, superstitions, emotions, traditions and diatheses which separate an American from an Englishman, a Zulu, or the bisque hero of a best-seller.
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> The man, of course, is an anarchist. Such earnestness is revolutionary, dangerous, insulting, abominable. The purpose of novel-writing as that crime is practiced in the United States, is not to interpret life—to make it a merry round of automobiling, country clubbing, seduction, money-making, and honeymooning with music by Victor Herbert. Novelists succeed among us in proportion as they keep outside the skin. But Mr. Phillips does not bid for success that way. He boldly ventures upon haphazard psychological laparotomies, he insists upon making indecent cross-sections of the American woman; he looks for the roots of ideals, not in the heart, but in the stomach; he orates vociferously all the while he is at work. The first impression he produces is that he is merely a noisy and lawless fellow; the second is that his remarks are interesting but untrue; the last is that, whether true or false, they are at least worth heeding and hearing, as the conclusions of a man who has approached his task seriously, who has brought with it an excellent technical equipment, and whose efforts to accomplish something worth while are sincere, dignified and praiseworthy.

And now, in the first series of *Prejudices* (1919), Mencken asked what had become of the three modern American novelists cited by his master Pollard as the most promising of all, namely, Churchill, Phillips, and Chambers:

> Phillips, with occasional reversions to honest work, devoted most of his later days to sensational serials for the train-boy magazines, and when he died

his desk turned out to be full of them, and they kept dribbling along for three or four years. . . .

Mencken then went on to beat the dead dog of Chambers' reputation, and, in a later argument of a different sort, juxtaposed so wild an assortment of names as Louis Joseph Vance, Rupert Hughes, George Bronson-Howard, Elbert Hubbard, and Phillips again.

For the prophet had come; Dreiser was in vogue among the "disillusioned" younger generation, negativism and debunking were the mode; and such blithe about-facings simply indicated that Mencken had no need for thinking about what he said, no check upon his libido; and that neither memory nor partisans existed to disturb his high-jinks.

III

Upton Sinclair had personal reason to appreciate Phillips, who had written him impulsively, praising *The Jungle* while it was still being serialized in *The Appeal to Reason*. Sinclair kept him in fond memory. Now, in *Mammonart* (1925) and *Money Writes!* (1927) he wrote lengthier expressions of his faith in Phillips' genius; and in the latter year Frank Harris, settled, contemptuous, and brash reiterated in his *Latest Contemporary Portraits* his conviction that Phillips was nothing less than the greatest American novelist. Sinclair and Harris both labored, and with some ultimate justice, under domestic literary disapproval, and neither endorsement, the one sociological and the other more or less aesthetic in approach, made a wide impression. It is worth noting, however, that no subsequent criticism of Phillips ever attempted to meet these essays on their own ground.

In 1931, in the same *Bookman* that had published the Cooper critique of Phillips twenty years before, appeared the article *David Graham Phillips, Journalist,* by Granville Hicks. A conventional writing, it is important because it seemed to achieve what several others attempted and failed: a synthesis of the contradictory criticisms of Phillips which had made it difficult for writers irritated by his work to dispose of it satisfactorily. Phillips had been criticized with peculiar catholicity of snobbery and socialism, sentimentality and cruel realism, over-earnestness and insincerity, and so forth. Mr. Hicks, working over the old formula of journalist and reformer fitted pieces with a modicum of care and research. Aside from that, little more can be briefly said for the article. Its

elementary fault was that it apparently could not discriminate Phillips' work. Phillips had published twenty-six books, twenty-four of them novels, and these had spanned a literary development with challenging features. Phillips had, in 1887, at the age of twenty, gone into journalism to learn what a novelist ought to know, and he had not left the field until he had felt himself ready to do so. At the age of thirty-four, he had published his first novel, *The Great God Success,* put together while he was still engaged in daily journalism. In his ten years of writing, after he had cut his newspaper bridges behind him, he had given himself no respite: he had written and rewritten (one story, published posthumously had appeared in a first draft in *Harper's Weekly* in 1891), rejected and developed his material, experimented with the themes of his experience, finding himself here more at home, there less, shifted the focus so that what was a sketch became a finished thing, as in the case of *A Woman Ventures* and *The Price She Paid,* separated by nearly ten years. *Susan Lenox* had been conceived in the early 1890's and had engaged him up to the year of his death.[4]

For Mr. Hicks, however, *all* Phillips' work was one and the same in the scale of things: for example, the journalistic quality of an article written in 1890 and of the "Senate" series of 1906, where, curiously enough, the future communist followed the reactionary lead of Mark Sullivan's *Our Times.* (When Mr. Hicks had joined forces with the communists, he revised his opinion of "The Treason of the Senate" to criticize Phillips . . . from the Left.) Stories, sketches, articles, first novels and later ones—all were equally grist for the thesis that Phillips was a hasty and confused writer of "scoops." The charge of haste was particularly unwarranted, since Mr. Hicks must have known that Phillips rewrote his novels three and more times, and been aware of the labors that entered into *Susan Lenox.*

Yet Mr. Hicks' artfully contrived essay probably did less damage to Phillips' reputation than the publication in 1932 of Isaac F. Marcosson's *David Graham Phillips and His Times.* Mr. Marcosson was in a key po-

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[4]For those interested, the present writer offers the following personal selection of Phillips' more important works, in tentative order of importance: *Susan Lenox: Her Fall and Rise* (1st ed., 1917); *The Husband's Story* (1910); *The Grain of Dust* (1911); *The Hungry Heart* (1909); *Old Wives for New* (1908).

sition to prepare a useful book on the subject. He had known Phillips' sister well, and as her literary executor for Phillips' works may have had ample material for a good book. What resulted, instead, was a hasty and impoverished *mélange* of well-known anecdotes, with meagre trifles pasted to, padded with arid stretches of material leaning on Frank O'Brien's *Story of the Sun* and Don Seitz's *Joseph Pulitzer,* and with much ado about George Horace Lorimer and the *Saturday Evening Post.* For the rest, the biographer offered blurb reviews of a number of Phillips' novels, written with fatuous enthusiasm, and a complete reprint of a "great" journalistic scoop by Phillips in 1893, all sheared and connected in Mr. Marcosson's well-known journalese. It is notable that the initiated might even here, in fugitive passages and letters, have caught glimpses of a living Phillips. It is not surprising that the common run of critics saw no reason for the book at all. One of these critics, trying to understand his own dissatisfaction, remarked with the unsubtlety of Frank Harris at his worst, at the lack of any indication of a sex life in the novelist. Some thoughtful reviewers recognized that the volume told less than the truth. Mr. Hicks, who in various instances used incredibly harsh words in literary reviews of talented writers politically in disagreement with him, was mildly content to call Marcosson's work inadequate.

IV

Such, then, has been literary criticism and personal evaluation—can the two be separated?—of Phillips. More could be added. Ludwig Lewisohn, for instance, in *Expression in America,* wrote with surprising freedom of Phillips' work, and no opinion of Phillips can ignore his pages. But neither can it ignore those of Alfred Kazin's *On Native Grounds,* which speaks with equal freedom "against" the novelist. The difficulty is that such criticisms are written without reference to one another, out of preconceptions and predilections strengthened by eccentric reading and influences. They do not supplement one another. They are, in the largest sense, not criticism at all, but merely vigorously maintained impressions.

The vitality of Phillips' work remains a fact to conjure with. One does not have to point to the fact that several of his books are in print, and that others, as Lewisohn pointed out, have lived "a kind of underground life in cheap reprints." Much more striking is the ignorance and confu-

sion which have attended and continue to attend his work. Current literary and "social" histories still note him with others as of a period when "Ida Tarbell wrote her *exposé* of Standard Oil; Steffens wrote of *The Shame of the Cities;* David Graham Phillips denounced *The Treason of the Senate* [*sic*]; Ray Stannard Baker gave his attention to the railroads . . ." by writers who have, in many cases, obviously not bothered to look into any of the works cited.

Psychically speaking, it could be argued that the pre-World War I generation inadequately understood itself. This is less surprising than the fact that its spirit and significance have been inadequately grasped by ourselves. We have developed critics, in recent years, capable of great subtlety. They have fine instruments, and have made the thinnest anatomical dissections of numerous personalities and styles. Yet they seem to be shy of others—Walt Whitman, for example, does not seem to have attracted their efforts to any degree. And they have been stopped completely, stopped to the point of ignorance, by a simple, hard-working man, who kept his own secrets, who disdained mysticism, inhibition, and temperament in an age which also made much of futile literary jargon. That his name was David Graham Phillips is perhaps less important than the fact that he has eluded understanding. For we can not, for a while at least, have too much understanding.

Books - - - -

Books In Western Germany

By ALFRED WERNER

Munich, where I spent some time last summer, is an excellent lookout for observing Western Germany's cultural development, particularly if Hugendubel's spacious bookshop on the Salvatorplatz is your headquarters. It is true that the Nazis almost succeeded in giving Munich the reputation of being the *Hauptstadt der Bewegung*, the center where Hitlerism originated. But before 1933 the city was known as the "Isar-Athen," the Athens on the Isar river, and it was a place of painters and museums, writers and publishing houses. In this city the Thomas Manns lived until their emigration. Some of Germany's most distinguished publishing firms had their headquarters in Munich, from the C. H. Beckschе Verlagsbuchhandlung, founded in 1763, to the modern Kurt Wolff Verlag. Beck still functions there, yet the Nazis forced Wolff to emigrate to the United States where he organized another firm, Pantheon Books. As a kind of postwar counterpart, several publishers fled from the ruins of Leipzig to those of Munich to escape the censorship and restrictions of the Eastern Zone.

Hugendubel's premises—perhaps as large as those of Brentano's in New York—survived the war unscathed. Other booksellers who were less lucky have set up their shops in flimsy makeshift stalls, where business goes on "as usual." It cannot be said that the book trade is really flourishing in the Bonn Republic; the number of copies of the average printed book is generally below five thousand because of the lack of material and labor, and the fact that for large numbers of people the purchase of a book is a luxury. Moreover, there is no legal trading in the book market between the German Federal Republic in the West and the German Democratic Republic in the East. Still, it is amazing how strongly Western Germany's economic recovery reveals itself in a well-supplied bookshop.

There is, of course, the psychological aspect. Anyone who visited Germany immediately after the war was struck by the *Lesehunger*, the book famine from which many Germans suffered almost as strongly as from physical hunger. Throughout the twelve years of the Nazi regime the Reich was an intellectual desert; an inestimable number of "undesirable" books perished in the bonfires supervised by Dr. Goebbels; then the Nazis decreed

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A native of Austria, ALFRED WERNER experienced Dachau and a brief internment in England, came to this country in 1940. This article was written out of a visit to Germany during the past year.

what books could or could not be printed, and what books could or could not be imported. In addition, the war losses of private and public libraries have been estimated as high as thirty million volumes.

Depleted of all intellectual substance, the postwar Germans read whatever books they could get. In the first months after the armistice, an emergency supply was provided by Overseas Editions, Inc., the paper-bound, pocket-size volumes produced by our Office of War Information. These books introduced our former enemies to German translations of American authors. Next came an experiment necessitated by Western Germany's economic poverty. To reacquaint his compatriots with the world's great books, Ernst Rowohlt, one of the foremost publishers in pre-Hitler Germany, printed millions of large-sized pamphlets on very cheap paper by means of rotogravure. These "books," which looked like tabloid newspapers, enabled the impoverished Germans to obtain for the equivalent of a dime the greatest works of foreign fiction, from Homer to Hemingway, as well as some native products, including Hjalmar Schacht's concoction, *Settling Accounts with Hitler*.

By now the Overseas Editions volumes, as well as the ungainly Rowohlt Rotations-Romane, have virtually disappeared. Instead, you see superbly printed and bound books, and many lavishly illustrated monographs on art and artists. Far from having abated, the *Lesehunger* seems to be as strong as it was when I first visited Frankfort, Heidelberg, and other cities several years ago. Nor has the demand for foreign authors, especially Americans, come to an end. Even diehard Nazis who refused to revise their *weltanschauung* after the debacle of 1945, read Yankee books—if only to find out what makes the Americans tick. Out of twelve new titles recently published by one firm, six were foreign (the Americans Hemingway, Thurber, James M. Cain, and Thomas Wolfe, and the French authors, Simone de Beauvoir and Jean-Paul Sartre).

It is, however, of greater importance to learn what German authors are in demand in the Bonn Republic. The classics derided by the Nazis unless (as in the case of Schiller and Heinrich von Kleist) they could be exploited for chauvinistic purposes are in vogue again. Heinrich Heine was verboten while his *Loreley* ("Author Unknown") was still sung, but now several selections from his romantic and satirical poetry and prose have been printed; nobody has as yet attempted to reissue his complete works, most editions of which were destroyed in 1933. Jacob Wassermann, who was one of Germany's most widely read novelists in pre-Hitler days, still retains his public. Stefan Zweig's highly indirect reaction to Hitlerism, his biography, *The Triumph and Tragedy of Erasmus of Rotterdam*, has only recently been presented to the Germans, seventeen years after its original publication outside Germany. Yet the "old-fashioned" liberalism and humanism of the Wassermanns and Zweigs has no strong appeal to the young Germans of today. Men and women

who grew up in the apocalyptic years of 1933-45 cannot listen easily to the voices of reason and equanimity that stem from the halcyonic pre-1914 tradition.

In general, the trend is towards surrealist metaphysics (which has nothing to do with escapism, for the metaphysical realm is hardly a comfortable place to dwell in), or towards its opposite, ruthless realism. As after other great conflagrations (the Thirty Years' War, the Napoleonic Wars, and the first World War), the preference is for metaphysics in a physically unpleasant world. Kafka, who was in vogue in the mid-'20's, and forbidden under Hitler as a Jewish author, is now being reissued. The most recent items have been his *Diaries*, and the Kafka biography by his friend, Max Brod. The German has an inherent knack for *gruebeln*, an almost untranslatable verb that stands for the tendency to ponder endlessly over the mysteries of life. Now he has a fondness for discovered Kafka, the author who coined the phrase, "Writing is a form of prayer," and for whom writing was a way of getting closer to the Truth and to God. At least two current best-sellers are Kafkaesque in nature, Hermann Kasack's *City Beyond the River*, and *Those Who Cannot be Found* by Ernst Kreuder.

Kasack's novel begins with the death of the hero. After having been transported across the river Lethe, he falls into the clutches of the uncanny Gestapo-like bureaucracy of the City of the Dead where he is mercilessly screened; in this city factories work day and night, some to produce goods, others to destroy them. Eventually the hero returns to life, only after having seen, as in a mirror, all the horror of modern technocracy and bureaucracy. In Kreuder's novel, the hero, hunted by the bloodhounds of the police, flees into an impenetrable forest where he meets a wise fisherman who teaches him that in order to be out of the reach of the "police" one has to live in peace with the powers of nature.

A similar message, but from a Christian viewpoint, is preached in the books of Ernst Wiechert. His novels would have been appreciated by Thoreau, but they have been a failure in twentieth century America. Written in lyrical prose, they are tales in praise of the contemplative life, with little action and a great deal of metaphysical meditation. Their heroes are foresters, peasants, landowners, pastors, and retired army officers who live in a setting of woods, heaths, and lakes. Once a heathen and a nationalist, Wiechert became a devout Christian and anti-Nazi about the time when the Hitlerites came to power. He made public addresses in which he criticized the Nazi regime until he was shut up, for a while, at the Buchenwald concentration camp. Wiechert lived to see the end of the hated regime, but after the war, disgusted with the Fatherland, moved to Switzerland where he died in August 1950. Curiously, several other German authors, among them the Christian existentialist, Professor Karl Jaspers, have sought a voluntary postwar exile in Switzerland. In commemoration of the first anniversary of Wiechert's death, his publisher released his "inflammatory" speeches,

An die deutsche Jugend, which were made mainly in Munich. Even in 1935 he had had the audacity to warn Munich university students that a nation which had abandoned the principles of religion and love was doomed to perish.

Just as Wiechert's anti-Nazi addresses were secretly passed from hand to hand in typescript during the '30's, the poems of Reinhold Schneider, advocating such subversive ideas as Christian morality and the brotherhood of man were clandestinely circulated among anti-Nazis. Once, however, the author managed to outwit the Nazi censor by publishing a "historical" novel, *Las Casas vor Karl V*. Las Casas was a 16th century Spanish priest who vainly worked for the abolition of slavery forced upon Latin American Indians by the Conquistadores. The book was a thinly disguised attack on the Nazi persecution of allegedly inferior races. Hardly noticed in this country (where it was published as *Imperial Mission*), it continues to be a bestseller in Germany where the memory of a tyrant far worse than Charles V is still undiminished.

Another Christian metaphysicist was Elisabeth Langgaesser, a poet and novelist who died a year ago. Her best-selling novel, *The Indelible Seal*, is a Catholic confession of faith. The hero is a Jew, who, after having been restless and unhappy all his life, gradually learns that salvation can come to him only through baptism and the abandonment of wealth. While appealing primarily to Catholics, the book has been praised by Protestants as a valid search for solution in a world of uproar and travail.

Included among the authors within the "surrealist" camp are writers who can hardly be called Germans, though they wrote in the German language. Among these are Kafka, the lyrical poet Rainer Maria Rilke, and the Jewish Catholic novelist, Franz Werfel, all of whom were born in Prague, and have been dead for many years. They are now again bestsellers in the Bonn Republic where they appeal to the sensitive and the young. Whenever questionnaires were sent out to German readers in order to learn which authors they preferred, Thomas Mann and Hermann Hesse, both in the "metaphysical" group, would head the lists of favorite writers; yet Mann is now considered by many to be an American author, while the Nobel Prize winner Hesse has been living in Switzerland for such a long time that he is rightly considered a Swiss author.

The opposite camp is that of the "neo-realists" who write in a style reminiscent of Hemingway, or of Norman Mailer. Among them are quite a few young Germans who try to give sincere accounts of the 1933-45 era. Significantly, several of their books have been translated into English, whereas Langgaesser, Kasack, and Kreuder (the "metaphysicists") are still untranslated. In *The Slaveship* Bruno E. Werner tries to cover the whole era from the burning of the Reichstag to the fall of Berlin; his hero, a newspaper editor, is a keen observer who loathes the Nazi regime but lacks courage, and accepts the

monsters with resignation. Of particular interest are the books written by men who were in the Wehrmacht. Albert Goes was an army chaplain; in *Unquiet Night* he describes such a chaplain's heroic efforts to pursue his vocation in a war during which atrocities unparalleled in history are committed. Hans W. Richter in *The Vanquished* tells of the last horrible battles in the mountains of Cassino; his hero complains that, when the German soldiers surrender to the Americans, the latter fail to distinguish between Nazis and anti-Nazis, and treat all of the Germans alike in the POW camps. Erhard Kaestner, an ex-member of the Afrika Korps (not related to the famous satirist and author of children's books, Erich Kaestner), in *The Tent Book of Tumilad* proved himself to be capable of deep philosophical insight amidst the turmoil of war. Lighter and less important is Hans Helmut Kirst's *The Lieutenant Must be Mad:* First Lieutenant Strick fights the Nazis by means of Till Eulenspiegel pranks and, in the last minute, manages to escape to Switzerland. In *Flight in the Winter* by Juergen Thorwald, who was a young German naval officer during the war, truth is stranger than fiction; his book describes factually the Russian invasion of East Prussia toward the end of the war, and the Nazi hierarchy in the days of the *Goetterdaemmerung*. While Thorwald was horrified by what he saw, Erich Kern, a former officer in Hitler's Elite Guards, shows no traces of regret—in *Dance of Death* he merely deplores that the Germans were unable to conquer the hearts of the Russians, and bring freedom and *Kultur* to these primitive people.

One of the greatest losses to postwar German literature was the premature death of Wolfgang Borchardt, another ex-soldier. A sensitive poet, he said "No!" to war, and all the cruelties it implies, and hence was jailed again and again by the Wehrmacht authorities. His drama, *Outside the Door*, which was played in New York on Piscator's Experimental Stage, mirrors the eternal tragedy of the homecoming soldier who is always "outside"; the spokesman of millions of disillusioned ex-Wehrmacht soldiers, he died in 1947, at the age of twenty-six, the day after his drama had its successful premier at Hamburg. In this group of neorealist works we might put *The SS State*, by Eugen Kogon, who was a soldier, too—he fought with his pen against the Nazis until they caught up with him. A work of nonfiction, *The SS State* has been selling well for the past five years. An ardent Catholic, Kogon describes in the greatest detail yet attempted, life in the concentration camps. He analyzed these camps as a social and political phenomenon bound to recur unless all Fascist tendencies are eradicated.

Unfortunately, Nazi tendencies are visible again in the book market of the Bonn Republic. In the first years after the war, nobody who was connected with the Nazi regime dared open his mouth. Doctor Schacht, in 1948, was the first to break the silence, attempting, with his memoirs, to do a little whitewashing. Then came *Hier spricht Hans Fritzsche*, published by a Zurich firm which insisted that these

excerpts from speeches by the Third Reich's Radio Boss were issued without Fritzsche's knowledge. Next were the memoirs of Weizsaecker, Ribbentrop's Good Man Friday. The most recent publication in this category has the affected Latin title: *Ex Captivitate Salus: Experiences, 1945-1947*. Its author, "Staatsrat" Professor Carl Schmitt, a brilliant jurist, lent his talents to legalize and justify the crimes committed by the Fuehrer. Did "salus" (well-being) come to him through his captivity as a Nazi offender? Judging by the mixture of self-pity and haughtiness in this little book, the answer can only be negative.

More dangerous, because they are confusing, are the concoctions served us by literati who were only part-Nazis. Ernst Juenger's *Radiations* is the diary of a high-minded fascist who, serving in the Wehrmacht in occupied Paris, calmly jots down his witty notes on French culture while only a block away French hostages are shot by the Gestapo. Gottfried Benn, a highly cultured physician and poet, has reissued his autobiography of 1933, with a lengthy postscript purporting to show that what he said in praise of the Third Reich and racialism was written tongue in cheek; his 1949 appendix is not convincing. A much better effort in this direction is the autobiography of his colleague, the physician and poet Hans Carossa, *Dissimilar Worlds*. Though Carossa lacked Wiechert's fortitude, he refused to howl with the wolves as did Dr. Benn.

The apologies by Ernst von Salomon and Hanns Grimm are vicious. Von Salomon who, in 1922, participated in the assassination of Walther Rathenau, the German foreign minister, was not a Nazi insofar as he despised the cruder, plebeian aspects of Hitlerism. His present book, *The Questionnaire*, a current bestseller despite its stiff price and its 800 crowded pages, purports to contain the answers given by a person suspected of former Nazi activities to all of the 131 questions asked by the Army of Occupation. As in a bad movie, the final outcome is clear from the first page: Von Salomon is innocent, and the only people at fault are the Allies. In *The Archbishop's Letter* Hanns Grimm answers the Archbishop of Canterbury who urged the Germans to atone for their crimes. Grimm who once coined the dangerous nationalistic slogan "Volk ohne Raum" (a nation which, lacking living space, has a moral right to expand its territory) tries in this book to turn the tables: the crimes the Germans are supposed to have committed are insignificant compared to those of the Allies.

At Hugendubel's in Munich there is a constant demand for *The Questionnaire* and *The Archbishop's Letter*. It would be unfair to say, however, that these "literary Remers" dominate the field. Among young Germans there are many, I have been told, who have not the slightest sympathy for a revival of Nazism, literary or otherwise. Throughout Germany, one does not have to walk far to find remnants of concentration camps. The Munich anti-Nazis, in particular, know that there is a Dachau just outside their city.

POSITIVISM: "WE SHALL NOT CEASE TO ASK QUESTIONS"

Positivism: A Study in Human Understanding. By Richard von Mises. Harvard, 1951. $6.

The appearance in English of a celebrated treatise on positivism calls for a more extended notice than might otherwise greet a book on scientific and philosophical methodology. For one thing, there is the opportunity to help clarify the meaning of a term like "positivism," which has suffered —along with allegedly related terms like "pragmatism," "scientism," "operationalism," not to mention the distinctly unrelated "materialism," "atheism," (shall we add "communism"?) —from the systematic confusion surrounding present-day revivals of supernaturalism. Secondly, von Mises' book, readable and even semi-popular, presents a moderate and relaxed picture of positivism, which avoids the harsh line and belligerent exaggeration sometimes affected by the more left-wing (or should it be right-wing?) expressions of the movement. This is particularly noticeable in the discussion of the problem of values. Indeed, one of the claims of the treatise is that ethics and the arts cannot be left out of the scientist's calculations. Finally, the appearance of *Positivism* offers one more occasion, before it is too late, to meet the serious contemporary challenge of what von Mises prefers to call "negativism"— what others have characterized as a "retreat from reason" and the "new failure of nerve." This challenge can be met only by closing ranks among the adherents of naturalism and scientific endeavor: the present work would seem to be an essay in that direction.

Richard von Mises is the mathematician and statistician, now Professor of Aerodynamics and Applied Mathematics at Harvard. (He is not Ludwig von Mises, the anti-socialistic economist.) His book is a translation of the earlier *Kleines Lehrbuch des Positivismus,* and it has been revised and brought up to date in the present American edition.

What, then, is "positivism"? To be sure, von Mises gives 400 pages in answer to that question. Yet it may not be presumptuous to attempt, in a preliminary way, the outline of an attitude which can be termed positivistic and which extends, of course, as far back as the beginnings of human intelligence. It is an attitude discoverable in the homely affairs of everyday life as well as in the schools of philosophy; for when we approach a problem reasonably and judiciously, with a willingness to suspend judgment when the evidence is not available or to change our judgment because of new experience, yet still with a willingness to act and to give our commitment on a less-than-certainty basis —this, von Mises insists, is the very foundation of what is to be called positivism. The attitude "implies a lack of prejudice, superstition, obstinacy, blind trust in authority, fanaticism." These denials constitute the heart of the scientific temper, which is but another name for positivism—at least according to our author. Other ver-

sions of positivism have been distinctly less generous than this and would tend to restrict "science" to the techniques of strictly physical and mathematical disciplines. But von Mises proclaims that "no procedure based on systematic observations from which conclusions may be drawn is declined by positivism." What, then, is *not* positivistic? "First of all is the idea that there exists an area of problems in which the intellect is not 'competent,' in which one *cannot* think or *must* not think. Next is the conception that there exists a realm of 'truth' which cannot be shaken by any experience, previous or future."

It must be repeated that "positivism" has not always meant something as broad as this. Often it has been taken to mean that nothing is real or significant except the immediate deliverances of the senses; and, negatively, that philosophy, values, and the arts, when not actually meaningless or superfluous, are at least vague enough to be devoid of intellectual respectability. This narrow view is repudiated by von Mises who apparently wants "positivism" to be the equivalent of more extended symbols like "naturalism" and "scientific humanism." Now, whether any one name is more appropriate than another to symbolize a notable human attitude need not be debated here; but the celebration of such an attitude and the wish to extend it to all areas of human experience needs to be applauded, even desperately applauded.

It will have to be admitted that there is nothing essentially novel about such a temper of mind; it may, indeed, be discovered even among some of the predecessors of Socrates and Plato. Nevertheless, "positivism" as such is a distinctly modern movement, tracing its present lineage back about a century to thinkers like Comte, Mach, and J. S. Mill; and the distinctly contemporary form of "logical positivism" goes back no more than a generation or so to the so-called Vienna Circle and to the analytical philosophers of Cambridge University. It is this particular movement, or rather a modification of it, which especially concerns von Mises.

Contemporary positivists are above all else devoted to the problem of language. This, again, is not something new in philosophy, but modern developments in mathematics and symbolic logic have given a new direction, if not a new urgency, to linguistics. (Indeed, the whole "semantic" renascence is not something apart from this, although nearly all positivists would reject with scorn much of what happens today in the field of "semantics.") The particular direction which has oriented the efforts of all brands of modern positivism has been, first, that of the "reduction" of complex to simple language, with "simple" standing for those symbols which have the closest relation to elementary sense data. That is, all language must depend, it is argued, on certain fundamental propositions, propositions which are themselves the immediate reports of sensory experience. These primary and irreducible sentences (e.g., "I am now seeing a yellow patch") have been variously

interpreted by the different brands of positivism and have been given a variety of names—protocol propositions, elements, simple sentences, and so on. The contemporary positivist is next concerned with the syntax whereby a linguistic structure can be built upon these basic reports, a structure which, like mathematics, will follow rigorous mechanical rules and will admit no extraneous material. Thus, a valid system of symbols (say, one of the physical sciences) will include (a) propositions based directly on sense data, and (b) analytical propositions which develop the entailments of the primary statements.

So far as it goes such an attempt at reconstructing language seems unexceptionable, despite the fact that the positivists' asumption of primary sense data has been seriously challenged by other contemporary philosophers. The difficulty has been that, although such a set of symbols might provide a recipe for constructing a physical science, there has been insuperable difficulty in adjusting so rigorous a language to a great deal of human experience—that which has traditionally gone under the names of philosophy and metaphysics, or even ethics and poetry. Many, if not most, of the sentences in these fields are neither basic propositions derived immediately from the senses nor statements of tight logical relationships; therefore, they become—according, at least, to the radical positivist—literally meaningless non-sense. In fact, to term metaphysics non-sense and theory of value meaningless has been almost the hallmark of much of present-day positivism.

Now, von Mises is not prepared to follow positivism to so extreme a position, and so he proposes a modification of the criteria which are to decide the validity of a language. For one thing, he denies the possibility of constructing in advance the complete rules of a logic or a language, since we cannot anticipate all the sentences that may legitimately apply for admission. All we can do, he points out, is to decide upon the internal consistency of sentences, what he calls "connectibility." "There exists a sphere of generally accepted linguistic rules, though not exactly defined and never explicitly formulated, on which ordinary language is based. . . . Whatever is in agreement with the stock of linguistic rules thus formed is simply called 'connectible as such' (meaningful)." Going beyond this, von Mises also refuses to formulate a syntax which will automatically disqualify any given area of experience. "By the introduction of the concept of connectibility we do not mean to discriminate against any aspect of intellectual life expressed in words." True, as with any positivist, he feels that much of what has been termed "metaphysics" in the history of ideas has indeed been meaningless; nevertheless he is prepared to investigate honestly the degree to which a particular philosophical work or school has constructed its own language, however narrow its range, and to discover, if possible, its measure of connectibility with other languages.

We cannot, of course, follow von

Mises' elaborate discussion of connectibilty (or meaningfulness) nor trace the ways in which, holding it as a key, he approaches the doors of logic, mathematics, physical theory, probability, statistical physics, and other technical disciplines. This investigation comprises a long section of his book. Our particular interest must be in his discussion of the humanities, the arts, and values. For here is where von Mises seems to break cleanly with many of his positivistic brethren and to suggest an attitude which is in no way irreconcilable with the various forms of American scientific humanism and instrumentalism.[1]

The thesis, in brief, of von Mises' appproach to the general areas of social science and the humanities is simply that "we shall not cease to ask questions." In contradistinction to this, the more rigid positivist will feel that meaningful questions cannot even be asked except in a narrowly circumscribed area of human experience. Now, it must be admitted that von Mises makes no significant contributions to aesthetics, or theory of value, or to any one of the several social disciplines. But he does sketch the framework within which "scientific" or "connectible" theories about human behavior and the arts can be devised, and he does propose a general temper of mind with which to react to the claims made upon scientific method by the value experiences of men. Perhaps the most economical way to present the author's position is to let him speak for himself. It must be understood that the following quotations are largely statements of conclusions reached by von Mises; they do not give a fair sample of his argument. The reader of the book can turn to those arguments for himself.

> We cannot accept it as connectible information that questions concerning art and beauty are to be settled by the allegation that they are irrational and cannot be formulated and answered in plain words. Anything that is said in any kind of language, that of everyday life, of science, or of poetry, is but an allusion to or a reminiscence of other (nonlinguistic) experiences and can never replace

[1]At this point it might be noted that von Mises evidences that studious neglect of American thought which is so conspicuous also in the work of other contemporary European thinkers. I have in mind even those—say, Karl Mannheim and Karl Popper—whose ideas parallel in many ways the ideas of thinkers in this country; yet even here no serious attempt is made to grasp what American philosophers have to contribute. With von Mises, for instance, it seems clear that he has not read, perhaps is not even acquainted with, the work of George Herbert Mead, that Charles Peirce is not much more than a name to him, William James totally misunderstood and quoted for exactly the wrong reasons, and John Dewey's monumental explorations completely unfathomed. Yet legions of second and third rate Continental scholars are paraded before us, the kind of men who come up only in Ph.D. examinations. This almost deliberate refusal to study American thought appears to be an occupational practice among modern German writers, even those long resident in the United States. Little can be done to bring about a fruitful union of philosophies like, say, positivism and pragmatism, until that neglect is overcome, as it has been long since in the natural sciences.

them or exhaust or fully reproduce them.

> The relations into which human individuals entered by joining in smaller or larger groups led to the use of expressions such as "ought" and "may," "will" and "must.". . . It is our task to study the matters of fact to which these linguistic creations correspond.
>
> The idea that there exists a fundamental unbridgeable difference in method or even in the kind of "understanding" between the natural sciences and the humanities is untenable. In history and the social sciences, too, one deals with observations, inductive generalizations, hence theories, and with the first approaches to tautological systems; every result is, in the last analysis, a proposition verifiable in experience.
>
> The justification of a system of norms can consist only in sentences that express connections between observable phenomena (actions and their consequences), and which, therefore, belong to the positive sciences, particularly to sociology. . . . The alleged existence of an objective scale of moral values, inborn in all men, is not supported by any observation. . . . We expect from the future that to an ever-increasing extent scientific knowledge, i.e., knowledge formulated in a connectible manner, will control life and the conduct of men.

Pronouncements such as these are quite unbuttoned and relaxed for a professional positivist. Yet they are interlarded with occasional demurrers which testify to the author's good standing in positivistic society. For one thing, as discoverable in the following quotation, he cannot quite free himself from interpreting "ethics" as necessarily referring to an absolute scale of values; nor can he see a really valid rapport between fact and value:

> All attempts at constructing a system of ethics (a system of absolute norms) upon theories of physics or biology must fail, since the propositions of these sciences (as of all others) are factual statements and not ought sentences. . . . In these [ethical] decisions, scientific (sociological) studies are relevant only in so far as they instruct one about the interrelations of various groups of actions and occurences.

How the attitude expressed here jibes with those above must be explained by von Mises, not by this reviewer. In any event, it is clear that he sees no way of making that all-important final leap from facts to values, and so he can still claim the label of "positivist." To suggest that the gap between fact and value is already being bridged by the contributions of anthropological studies with which von Mises does not seem acquainted (even though the most significant of them is taking place in his own university), or to propose that the *theoretical* problem of the relation between fact and value has at least been broached by some of the American philosophers von Mises passes over—these suggestions are not our particular concern here. For at the moment our basic point is, appropriately, positive not negative. That is, the present book is clearly an appeal to the forces of scientific intelligence and of naturalistic explanation. It is an appeal against obscurantism and against the revolt from reason. As von Mises puts it:

> At the present time many ideas are being advanced and widely publicized (here called negativistic) which are directed toward assigning to the intellect a subordinate or even harmful role in life, and which expect any progress of humanity only from the use of fundamentally different qualities, like instinct and vision. In contrast to this, we maintain that all knowledge of a theoretical, as well as of a practical, kind is gained by the co-operation of the various—and by no means opposite—human capacities, and that no substantial result can be reached in a way that is incompatible with the demands of the intellect. . . . We see in the intellect the ability man has to use when he collects and organizes knowledge and wants to communicate it in a reasonable fashion.

A general orientation like this seems vital. At a time when there is so much avowed and unavowed contempt for the individual and for his rational powers, manifestoes like this appear imperative—necessary if not themselves sufficient. Perhaps, then, it may be good tactics to minimize what appear to be the serious limitations in even von Mises' relaxed version of positivism, and to concentrate on the affirmative contributions and encouragements that the various philosophies of naturalism can give to one another.

GEORGE R. GEIGER

EXECUTIVE GENIUS AND POLITICAL FAILURE

Lloyd George. By Thomas Jones. Harvard University Press, 1951. $5.

Future historians of Liberalism may care to reflect on the brevity of the period in which the cause flourished in party politics, and estimate the causes of its decline and fall, now seemingly definitive. Should the Liberal Party be viewed as a transitional stage upon the movement from Whiggism to Socialism, a product of the 1867 Reform Bill and the nonconformist conscience? Should the radicalism of Joseph Chamberlain and Lloyd George be considered as an attempt to check and divert this movement, to prevent the crushing of the party between the forces of labor and property? Or did the radicals possess a distinctive faith, to be distinguished from political opportunism or dogmatic Socialism? Again, the radicalism of Chamberlain and Lloyd George led both to divide their party, and to cooperate with Conservative cabinets, the one as Colonial Secretary, the other as Prime Minister: was it merely force of circumstance, of character, or of an essentially limited radical impulse that provided like patterns to their careers?

Any consideration of British radicalism in the last seventy-five years must concern itself with such questions, and a biography of Lloyd George bearing on these issues has long been needed. Dr. Jones does not claim to have provided a definitive work: his book is "an interim unofficial contribution,"

written, as he says, by one who has been a civil servant and is not a trained historian. As Assistant, and later Deputy, Secretary to the Cabinet, he was granted a view of Prime Ministers as administrators rather than politicians, and in consequence his study is essentially one of Lloyd George as a great executive, in the years 1914 to 1922. We are provided with a contribution that is both more than a memoir or a monograph: it is a shrewd estimate of a man whose abilities were in a sense ephemeral, and as such an invaluable preliminary to the detailed research which may be possible when all the documents are made available. For it is clear that Lloyd George's power, and fascination, sprang from the presence of the man. No writings provide a convenient summary of his political philosophy; his correspondence was practical, rather than discursive. "Letters are the very devil. They ought to be abolished altogether," he once remarked. To recreate the continual conversations, the personal contacts, the exercise of his tremendous powers of persuasion, is a task that may well defeat the most assiduous.

There is now a generation that can recall only the Elder Statesman, the market gardener in Surrey, whose recall to the Cabinet was a momentary topic of conversation in 1940, and was heard occasionally in Parliament offering the advice that had won World War I. The assault on the House of Lords, the national insurance scheme and the Parliament Act, the war leader and the postwar demagogue have passed into history without being examined in historical terms. It is, as it were, a region of folklore that has yet to be systematically explored. Dr. Jones has been able to provide from personal experience a portrait of the quicksilver, intangible nature of Lloyd George, as one who knew him in his prime, yet retained a sense of proportion in estimating his talents. Methodical research may correct details, yet lack the authenticity of this account.

Lloyd George was unique, even in an age that was throwing up political leaders from new sectors of society. He was neither Whig, Tory, businessman or labor leader. He reached Parliament at the age of twenty-seven, a product of the Celtic heart of Wales. Neither in his youth, nor at any later date was he of the working class: he was unaffected by political dogma throughout his life. His speeches smacked of the chapel, with an underground swell of biblical reference; his policies were piecemeal, combining a sense of the politically necessary with the executive ability requisite to carry them through. He was not a great parliamentary figure: during the war and the coalition he delegated most of the business in the House to Bonar Law, and while Chancellor of the Exchequer had presented his budgets with none of the skill and comprehensive delight in finance that had distinguished Gladstone. As Dr. Jones points out, his budget speech in 1909 was a fumbling and undistinguished performance. The passage of the Finance Bill taxed his abilities: the resistance of the House of Lords merely stimulated them. He was un-

happy defending dreadnoughts, but joyfully assailed dukes.

"He remained essentially a radical to the end," claims Dr. Jones, but it might be worth while to inquire into the essence of this radicalism. Why did he become politically isolated in his later years, and on whom, for that matter, did the radical cause devolve? Was the fate of Liberalism inevitable, to be crushed between the millstones of Labor and Conservative conflict? Was the Welsh nonconformist demanding a fair deal for the working man at one with the man who cried "Hang the Kaiser" and delighted in winning prizes for his crops?

A cabinet minister at the age of forty-two, he remained in office continuously for sixteen years. Whatever that office was, he worked it hard. As President of the Board of Trade, Chancellor of the Exchequer, Minister of Munitions, and Prime Minister, his subordinates and the country felt immediately the effects of his energy. In the 1920's, when the cause of Liberalism still seemed possible, he presided over a formulation of policy that bears close resemblances to Labor Party measures after 1945. He was able to combine the ability to administrate with the power to initiate: for him the politically necessary was the politically possible. His contribution to radicalism, however, is peculiarly difficult to discern, since he was directed by intuition rather than a consistent policy. The failure of this approach is clear in his attitude to foreign affairs, with his stand against intervention in Europe in the last days of July 1914, and his admiration for Hitler, expressed as late as 1936. In home affairs, on the other hand, this gift was of the greatest value. In a period when Liberalism was growing more efficient and less popular he was the indispensable counter-balance. Against the cold capacity of Asquith, Haldane and Grey could be set the warmth of his oratory. Lloyd George was the last Liberal aware of the necessity, and blessed with the ability, to sway a great audience. Yet in him a great link between the power to control a Cabinet, and address the people was wanting—the ability to win the affection and trust of his political equals.

Possibly a cause of this failing was the belief that he had no political equals. He had no genius for friendship: his leisure was spent on Surrey golf courses with press lords, his acquaintances were political, and made to further his political ends. A constant thread of distrust runs through his career, from the belief that he had planned to use his budget proposals as a means to attack the rights of the House of Lords, to the Marconi scandal, to the intrigues surrounding the deposition of Asquith in 1916, and the attempted removal of Haig, to the proscription of the opposition Liberals in the "coupon election" of 1918, to his management of Liberal Party funds in the '20's. In the continuous series of conferences and political bargains that surrounded him he strained sincerity to the utmost, gave dubious assurances, played disingenuous roles with more enthusiasm than credit. It was a fault bred of his qualities, but one that was to tell against him in the days of his

decline. His treatment of Asquith during the war was born of the sublime self-confidence and sense of urgency that made Chatham and Churchill his equals as leaders in time of crisis. His treatment of the Liberals in peace was of the same pattern without the same justification. In the '20's, his attempts to inject into the Liberal Party a new enthusiasm and popular appeal were fundamentally sound. Yet the network of personal distrust and enmity, coupled with his insistence that as paymaster he must retain sole power, frustrated his efforts. Even so, it is worth recalling that in his most sustained campaign, that of 1929, the Liberals polled 23 per cent of the total vote, and suffered at the hands of a system of representation rather than by popular rejection.

Lloyd George had a sense of political possibilities unequalled by any politician of his age: he was the superb manipulator of voters newly conscious of their political aims. In the immediate event it did not greatly matter that his policies were instinctive, in the long run the solid power of the trade unions—with whom he never really came to grips—told decisively against him. His radicalism was emotional, by background and nature: it was worthy, remedial, and unstable. His executive powers were superb. The wrath that had been turned upon the Dukes was vented upon the Generals, the power that had created a system of national insurance in a matter of months was able to gear a nation to total war for the first time in its history. Equipped with such gifts his eclipse needs more explanation than that the Liberal Party was doomed to fall between Labor and Conservative. It is to be found, perhaps, in personal failings, and the unsuspected power of ideas to overcome immense talents in the minds of the people. No one could compare the abilities of Lloyd George with those of Ramsey MacDonald, yet the mediocrity of the one proved more necessary to the working man than the genius of the other. As Mr. Churchill may realize, talent, however great, does not draw a direct line to popular trust.

PETER MARSHALL

New Haven, Conn.

WRITERS IN MOTION

Exile's Return. By Malcolm Cowley. Viking, 1951. $3.50.

The Autobiography of William Carlos Williams. Random House, 1951. $3.75.

World Within World. By Stephen Spender. Harcourt, Brace, 1951. $3.50.

Exile's Return was first published in 1934. In the introduction to the revised edition, Malcolm Cowley tells us that he had wanted to set down the story of the lost generation while its adventures were still fresh in his mind. But this book was not to be merely a liter-

ary history of the 1920's. Cowley writes,

> Essentially what I wanted to write was less a record of events than a narrative of ideas. But the ideas would be of a certain type: they would not be the ones that people thought they held at the time or consciously expressed in books and book reviews; they were rather the ideas that half-consciously guided their actions, the ideas that they lived and wrote by.

Both the prologue and the epilogue of the present edition are rewritten, and for the most part these now consist in qualifications and apologies for the major text, which remains basically unchanged. (There is some added commentary concerned with Scott Fitzgerald, Ezra Pound, and a few other literary figures.) There is much confession: the original book "fell considerably short of its aims"; there were "many gaps" in the story; "the whole conclusion of the book was out of scale with the beginning"; "there were also political opinions that intruded into the narrative."

In the final paragraph of *Exile's Return,* Cowley discusses his full treatment of the 1920's. He is led to remark,

> It was a better age for writers than I have made it seem—more serious, harder working, more soulful in its dissipations and above all more fruitful. By choosing for emphasis some of its more picturesque episodes and characters I have given a partly distorted impression. By using books as texts I have done less than justice to the fine novels and poems that the era produced.

Inevitably, one wonders at the republication of this volume, for Cowley has not now succeeded in overcoming the faults of which he speaks. Indeed, as he tells us, this was not his intention; as a result, much of his new commentary has the air of a benevolent book review; it is as if the mature Cowley were sympathetically considering the work of a young and ardent critic, perhaps a disciple of Cowley.

Although *Exile's Return* offers much in the way of lively narrative and shrewd though innocent insight, it is yet seriously awry. We have from it a social and literary picture of the '20's, but one that is both out of normal perspective and that has no compelling, organic perspective of its own. Part of this is owing to Cowley's critical method, whereby he rejects the ideas people in the '20's *thought they held,* the ideas they *consciously expressed* in their writings, favoring instead the half-conscious ideas which he feels guide human actions. What these are is open to speculation. Indeed, Cowley's whole approach to a narrative of ideas is suspect, for it is quite unlikely that the ideas people "lived and wrote by" are divided significantly from the fabric of their thinking and writings. Moreover, to make such an arbitrary division in terms of a whole generation, without any adequate checks in the light of the reality one rejects, is necessarily to depend heavily upon personal vision and intuition and to run the risk of seeing connections where they do not exist, or of failing to see connections where they are ordinarily apparent. To eliminate an important category of evidence is at least to distort one's conclusions for a theory.

It can be argued that Cowley does

not actually follow the logical implications of his critical method, but he follows his method enough to confound the obvious. And what happens? There are altogether too many generalizations which, while they fit more or less into Cowley's thesis, have only a naive relation to the facts. To say of the United States in 1921 that it "had ceased to be a colony of European capitalism" is to tell the truth, but to tell far less than the whole truth. By 1921, Europe was well on the way to being an economic colony of the United States, of American capitalism. A fantastic example of Cowley's generalizations reads, "The writers of our generation were humble in the sense that they did not hope to alter the course of events or even to build themselves an honored place in society. Their class, the urban middle class, was lacking in political power; it was indeed so empty of political ideas as not to realize that such power was being exercised by others."

Also, part of the distortion in *Exile's Return* results from Cowley's very nearness to the events and ideas he describes. He is emotionally so involved with the period of the '20's, in all its personal meaning for him, that he is unable to give it objective treatment. Objectivity, of course, is relative; the autobiographical element in this narrative is one possible and perhaps not unreasonable claim against a historian's view of the decade. However, this book suffers from an analytical critical method based upon subjectivity and emotion. It is romantic history. In the prologue, Cowley tells us, "I had written at length about the life of Harry Crosby, whom I scarcely knew, in order to avoid discussing the more recent death of Hart Crane, whom I knew so well that I still couldn't bear to write about him."

In the narrative Crosby becomes a symbolic failure of the '20's. But he is not a central figure and, more important, he is not a valid symbol. A rich and dissipated dilettante, suffering from complex psychological disturbances, might have committed suicide at the beginning, middle, or end of any decade. Crosby may have based his life to an extent upon a misapprehension of the Symbolist poets, but he might also have based it on any personal miscalculation of any other phenomenon. Crane's situation was more germane to the period, both in the nature of his personal defeat and in his attempts to build an integrated myth of America through poetry.

Cowley is too much concerned with the negative aspects of the 20's. He is too eager to place the Symbolist poets in the role of devils, offering the irresistible temptations of art for art's sake (as opposed, one presumes, to the growing social consciousness of the 1930's). He sees too much disorganization, too much disillusionment and failure. Any generation of writers has its casualties, either through personal or social crisis, but these need not be made to outweigh the accomplishment of a decade when, all things considered, the casualties were surprisingly light, the opportunities for achievement many.

The author himself takes exception in the new prologue, "They were not a lost generation in the sense of being

unfortunate and thwarted, like the young writers of the 1890's. The truth was that they had an easy time of it, even as compared with the writers who immediately preceded them." The fact is that a revolution in American letters was bequeathed ready-made to Cowley's generation. From the beginning of the century, the arts had been struggling toward new modes of expression and new values. James Gibbons Huneker was educating Americans to European culture in art, literature, and music. The Armory Show of 1913 was in a sense the culmination of the fight to bring modern art to the attention of the American public. A cultural renaissance had developed in so unlikely a place as Chicago. By 1921, there had been many new writers to shape an American tradition: Theodore Dreiser, Carl Sandburg, Sinclair Lewis, Willa Cather, Frank Norris, Stephen Crane, Robert Frost, Edith Wharton, Edgar Lee Masters, Ellen Glasgow, Edwin Arlington Robinson, James Branch Cabell, Sherwood Anderson.

Evidence such as this makes the disenchantment, the spiritual isolation, and the rootlessness of Cowley's generation of middle-class Americans seem exaggerated. The answer is that few American writers really "left home"; spiritually and materially, they had the comfortable cushion of America to fall back on; they were vacationists, tourists, and like tourists everywhere they felt entitled to a bit of eccentricity away from home.

Europe had suffered much as a result of the First World War; America had suffered little; yet it was the Americans who took most seriously their designation as the "lost" generation. That the appellation was first used by an American writer to another American writer, neither of them lost, by the way, is not without point. There is a singular provinciality reflected in this view of themselves shared by so many American expatriates; cosmopolitans do not customarily regard themselves as rootless; they are "at home" in many places; their ability is to see what is unique and what is common in cultures. They accept and assess the world like anthropologists.

And some of the American expatriates remained conscious of their roots in a positive and creative way. They understood that literature is conventional and traditional, that one does not break with past developments so much as modify them, extend them, amplify them, change their direction. They came to understand, too, that writing is a discipline, and they worked, learning the world, symbolizing it within the means of their craft, discovering and interpreting the realities not only of their own times but of the past. They are the successes of the 1920's or of any other period, and *their* story is well worth the writing.

The tendency to write literary history, especially in the United States, as a record of frustrations and failures does too little justice to what is concretely achieved. The whys and wherefores of a truncated career has a certain academic interest, but it raises other and imponderable questions. *History* has its casualties, and

one may well speculate whether Hart Crane under altered circumstances might not have given us the greatest poetry of the twentieth century. But this is like asking what would have happened if Napoleon had conquered England. There is no perfect, predictable standard of self-realization.

It must be remembered that Cowley wrote *Exile's Return* early in his career as a social critic. At that time, he did not command his tools with the expertness of a master, as he now does. He tried to do too much, much too passionately. His materials were shaped to diverse and even to disparate ends; he freely mingled psychology, autobiography, political and social theses, aesthetic philosophy. He was eager to emphasize the social role of the writer, by showing the moral and spiritual chaos, the personal frustration and bitterness, that allegedly go hand in hand with an art-for-art's-sake attitude or an emphatic preoccupation with form, with the writer divided from society. He was concerned also to liberalize America.

He almost seems to be saying: We writers left America because we were frustrated by the gap between American ideals and American practice; we went to Europe in the hopes of finding the responsible writer's life that was denied us in America where we were not considered vital elements of society; our experience in Europe taught us the folly of isolating literature from the everyday realities of life; many of us fell into temptation, but some of us have decided to assume the responsibilities of our social role, as writers; now we have come back to our homeland and our birthright, and we will not be content to remain isolated; you can help us, but you must also remember that we can help you by humanizing life, by enriching the spiritual and material values of our common civilization.

However, since the '20's are used as the focal period of the writer's problems to be resolved in the '30's, a distorted impression remains. The writer appears to be the victim of a hostile capitalist society which drives him to exile, dissipation, frustration, and failure on the one hand or to compromise and ineffectuality on the other. Those who survive to do important work are more or less obscured in the picture of general chaos. The omission in the present edition of the political opinions which gave a certain selective point to many of Cowley's arguments hardly clarifies the narrative. It can be forgotten that writers are the products of civilization, and that in the twentieth century they have far more opportunities for unfrustrated development and are likelier to survive than perhaps at any other period in history.

II

The Autobiography of William Carlos Williams is the story of a writer who avoided the pitfalls of this stereotype. Dr. Williams offers his reminiscences of a full and busy life in the fields of medicine and literature with warmth and self-searching. Determined to be a writer and yet aware of the difficulties inherent in a life devoted to experimental writing, he chose to be a physician, writing when he could find the time. He refused the

life of a bohemian exile or a literary hack. He was determined to free himself from the financial and psychological pressures of a literary career; he felt the need to learn his craft by himself; he knew he would not make money from writing; he had no desire to starve for art or to seek for patronage.

There is an essential balance in his decision (some would consider it a dangerous balance, destructive to the writer), but Dr. Williams to a large measure has proved it a true one by the range, variety, and excellence of his work. He is poet, short story writer, novelist, playwright, critic, and autobiographer. For him, medicine was a means to his art. Through his work as a physician, he was brought closer to people, to life, than he might have come by any other profession including the purely literary.

Williams considers that human beings are defeated by inarticulateness, by being locked within themselves, and what is shut away in individuals are their common human aspirations and needs, the symbolic cries which illuminate the reality we all know. It is the ordinary physician rather than the psychoanalyst, Williams feels, who can draw close to the mythic and poetic in all men; what the physician is forever fathering and witnessing is the birth of communication, the essence of human character reacting to life. He writes, "Under that language to which we have been listening all our lives a new, a more profound language, underlying all dialectics offers itself. It is what they call poetry. That is the final phase."

Thus, the poet was able to draw significantly upon the experience of the doctor, and the doctor's calling was enriched through the vision and vicariousness of the poet. However, Williams himself suggests that the ideal life for a writer need not be in the world of men and events:

> . . . much of the world's greatest writing has waited on a removal from the world of affairs for its doing. Concentration is what a man needs to bring his mind to harvest. We may and he will, whoever he may be, change ourselves by our contacts, but to drain off the good we must find quietude. The monk's cell is ideal for the purpose, though it has limitations in its narrowing orthodoxy or partisanship of outlook. Nevertheless it represents quiet, relief from economic pressures: one can write then. Prison, though, is better, or seems to have been so in the past.

Certainly, quiet and isolation were almost never the conditions of Williams' life. He gives us a description of his writing habits:

> Five minutes, ten minutes, can always be found. I had my typewriter in my office desk. All I needed to do was to pull up the leaf to which it was fastened and I was ready to go. I worked at top speed. If a patient came in at the door while I was in the middle of a sentence, bang would go the machine—I was a physician. When the patient left, up would come the machine. My head developed a technique: something growing inside me demanding reaping. It had to be attended to. Finally, after eleven at night, when the last patient had been put to bed, I could always find the time to bang out ten or twelve pages. In fact, I couldn't rest until I had freed my mind from the obsessions which had been tormenting me all

> day. Cleansed of that torment, having scribbled, I could rest.

Elsewhere Williams testifies that such rest as he had came directly from writing and from the practice of medicine. These were his renewal of strength.

Whether Williams would have made a better writer or a better doctor by applying himself to one of these professions only is a question that cannot be answered conclusively. There are those who feel that Williams' writing is fragmentary, that it fails of greatness because it lacks over-all unity and integration. Indeed, often it seems hurried, casual, occasional; but this need not be the fault of the doctor. The continuing conflict over the want of the writer for an exclusively literary life cannot be resolved in a generalization. It may be said, even as Williams has suggested, that the best writing often waits upon leisure and isolation (I do not myself favor monasteries or prisons), that literature is a discipline worthy of a man's full and consistent effort; but there are too many notable exceptions for this to be the inflexible rule. On the one side, one may think of Proust; on the other, one may think of Goethe. Although more writers seem to benefit from a life of devoted literary activity, the question at last devolves upon temperamental differences among writers. It would be ideal if a truly free choice could be offered each of them.

Williams, on his part, was able to make himself one of the foremost poets of twentieth-century America. Through work, and through a consciousness of his roots and of his heritage, he was able to judge the world as he found it, to weather its storms. His accounts of people and places, of the home folks, no less than of the literary expatriates in Paris, are wise and tolerant. Both the physician and the poet discovered the multiplicity of life and sought within this diversity the genuinely creative element, that which brings men forward in the understanding of themselves and of the world. The quality of Williams' mind is rather like Dreiser's (there is even some similarity in the styles of these men), and an abiding human sympathy is everywhere in this book.

There are many portraits of writers and artists. Williams was a schoolfellow of Hilda Doolittle and Ezra Pound. He knew Pound intimately, and we see them together as young men in Pennsylvania, later in London and Paris. There is even a meeting at St. Elizabeth's, where Pound is today confined. Also, there are accounts of Joyce in Paris, of Gertrude Stein, to whom Williams acknowledges a special debt, of William Butler Yeats, Ford Madox Ford, Djuna Barnes, Mina Loy, Marsden Hartley, Nancy Cunard, Charles Demuth, Malcolm Cowley, Alfred Steiglitz, and others. To each of these, Williams brings a sense of human personality rather than a sense of literary history. These are his memories of friends and acquaintances seen through the perspective of time.

Precisely because it is so completely a human testament, *The Autobiography of William Carlos Williams* is a valuable book. It tells us that sanity and tolerance can be at the center of literature, that a poet can grow indi-

vidually through his work, without corruption or anguish, to become an honored citizen of his place and time.

III

Stephen Spender was born in 1909, the year William Carlos Williams first published a volume of poetry, and yet Spender's autobiography, *World Within World,* is so filled with ideas, events, and personalities that it seems to be the work of an older man than Spender is. This remarkable book is an intellectual and moral history, relating with great candor and feeling the story of the poet's coming to maturity. More than this, it is a book concerned with the developing social and political climate of Western Europe during the 1930's and '40's.

Spender's mental and emotional growth were not without the acutest difficulties. As a child, he felt isolated within his personal problems. His early school years were misery. There was little sympathy for the arts in his family. He writes, "In our house at Frognal the names of Augustus John, Bernard Shaw, Lytton Strachey, Van Gogh, stood for a diabolic cunning depravity, a plot of bearded demons against which all should be held sacred." At Oxford, he was faced with the ingrown snobbism of university life.

Here, however, he met the rebellious W. H. Auden, whose great influence and liberating catholicity he acknowledges. He began to read widely and to write seriously. He began to see his own personality in a new and fuller perspective. He was becoming a writer, growing into the values required by work. This story itself is one of high drama, and it is written with uncommon frankness and with a profound grasp of its psychological essentials. Spender reveals his uncertainties, his errors, his limitations; the whole emergence of his individuality is set down without vanity or malice.

One is struck by the justness of his insights, and even where Spender's reasoning fails, as it sometimes does, that very failure can be seen in a dynamic relationship to the man. There is no presumption here that perfect answers are being given; rather it is the process of a sensitive man's adjustment that is illuminated against his time and situation. Spender's focal problem is to discover and accept his own nature so as to live responsibly as a creative writer. Whether the immediate theme is love or politics, this underlying inquiry is present.

After he left Oxford, Spender lived on and off for several years in Germany, in Hamburg and Berlin. His account of the young Germans, his contemporaries, and of the heightened emotional atmosphere in which they lived, is a valuable addition to the record of social history in the last years of the Weimar Republic. Here is the poetic myth of a generation that became an integral of Nazism.

In Berlin, Spender became the close friend of Christopher Isherwood. Later, in England, his literary friendships increased. We see him in the home of Leonard and Virginia Woolf and of Lady Ottoline Morrell. We find him with T. S. Eliot, Yeats, Harold Nicholson, William Plomer, Cyril Connoly —a whole galaxy of writers. And

Spender's portraits are wholly alive, often brilliant. His literary judgments are incisive.

(It is interesting to contrast Spender's account of the Bloomsbury Group, most of whom did not become famous until after the war, with the American expatriate generation of the '20's and '30's: these English writers were not demoralized or rootless; they were vitally interested in restating "past values in the imagery and idiom of today.")

Perhaps the most illuminating aspect of this autobiography is in its discussion of the writer and politics. Spender was in Germany in the early 1930's; he was in Austria in 1936; after the beginning of the Spanish Civil War, he joined the Communist Party; he traveled extensively in Spain during the Civil War; he wrote in the cause of anti-Fascism; during the Second World War, when he had broken with Communism, he was a member of London's Fire Fighters. He seems always to have been where the crisis was in Europe, not merely as an observer, but as an intellectual active in the struggle against Fascism. (His description of the Madrid Writers' Congress in 1937 is masterful.) Often his political comments are arresting, but what may have particular point for us today is the evolution of his attitude toward the political role of the writer.

Should a writer allow his talents to be enlisted in the services of a political cause? Do writers have a political function beyond that of ordinary citizens? Ought writers to be more responsive to public controversies and engage in standardized partisan propaganda? Today writers are under particular pressure to choose either the dogmas of the East or of the West. But Spender has come to believe that there is no "historically correct position" for the writer. He writes, "The individual must not be swallowed up by the concept of social man."

Describing his own situation, he says, "I could not escape from myself into some social situation of which my existence was a mere product, and my witnessing a willfully distorting instrument. I had to be myself, choose and not be chosen." Again, he tells us:

> To believe that my individual freedom could gain strength from my seeking to identify myself with the "progressive" forces was different from believing that my life must become an instrument of means decided on by political leaders. I came to see that within the struggle for a juster world, there is a further struggle between the individual who cares for long-term values and those who are willing to use any and every means to gain immediate political ends—even good ends. Within every good social cause, there is a duty to fight for the pre-eminence of individual conscience.

The function of the writer is perhaps more than ever that of the individual free witness.

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